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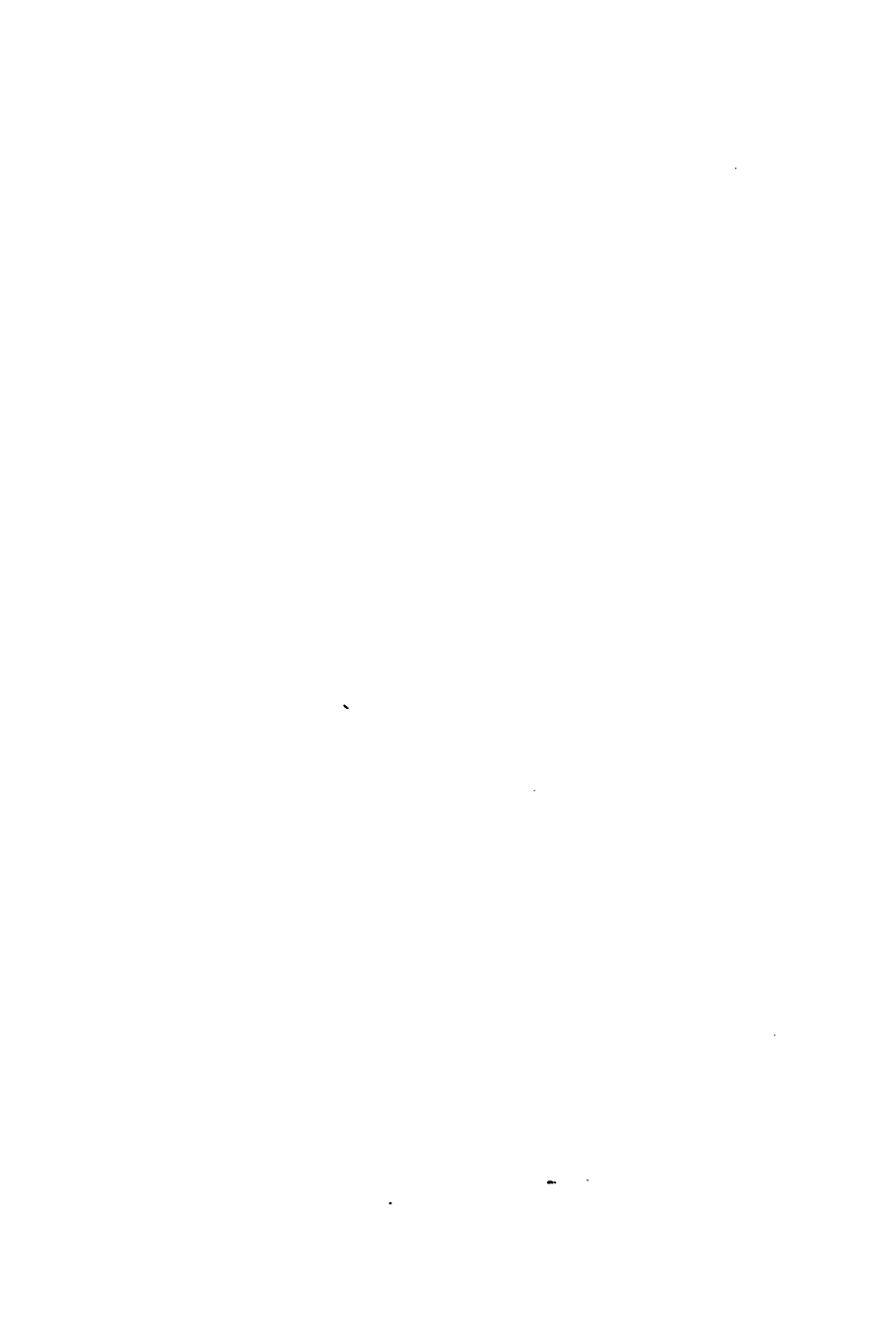
OXFORD





Art:

ITS SCOPE AND PURPOSE.



Art:  
ITS SCOPE AND PURPOSE;

OR,

A Brief Exposition of its Principles :

A LECTURE  
DELIVERED AT A MECHANICS' INSTITUTION,  
(WITH SUBSEQUENT ADDITIONS).

BY

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## PREFACE.

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Soon after the close of the Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures, the writer undertook to assist in the ensuing Winter Course of Lectures at the Nottingham Mechanics' Institution.

He selected the subject of Art for this purpose, not only as one with which he was professionally conversant, but which a popular audience might now regard with more than usual interest. His object was to present a general view of Art not in any way technical, but such as should convey some notion of its province, and its powers, touching at the same time on a few of its leading controverted questions.

He trusts that the same object may be served by the following pages, in which he has endeavoured to render the survey somewhat

more complete, and to enliven it by a few additional illustrations ; the Lecture, in other respects remaining as it was delivered. His aim, therefore, is limited. He leaves ampler elucidation to more able hands, content if he sends any one, in search of richer and fuller sources of information, to consult the abundant Art Literature of the day.

MARDEN ASH, *May*, 1858.

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THE  
SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF ART.

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MANY circumstances lead to the conclusion that Art is taking a new place in public regard. Schools of design, local exhibitions, the extent to which the middle classes of society have become purchasers of pictures, the interest taken in certain Art controversies, the zest for Photography, and, not least, such a fact as the recent Exhibition of Art Treasures at Manchester—all indicate a change of opinion in this country respecting the claims and uses of this peculiar exercise of human faculty.

In connection, however, with the present hopeful condition of Art, as it regards the appreciation of the masses, two facts of somewhat opposite character are noticeable. First, as might naturally be expected, it is apparent that Art is as yet little understood by the majority

of its new votaries. They possess but a very crude and uncertain notion of the true grounds of artistic excellence; their choice is ruled by vague likes and dislikes, dependent entirely upon individual taste, or no taste. It is common to hear such an avowal as this—"I only know what pleases *me*." And the "*me*," in this case, has probably never had much acquaintance with works of Art, and has had still less opportunity of considering what Art really intends to do—its *purpose*—or the range of its resources—its *scope*.

The second fact might not have been so readily anticipated. This is the amount of controversial, partisan bitterness which has been roused by recent Art discussions. An advocacy of conflicting claims and theories divides, in our exhibition-rooms, many a group in lively altercation. Such phrases as these are heard—"Now, that I call detestable!" applied to some conspicuous specimen; and, "Much as I abominate Pre-Raffaellitism, I must admit," etc., etc. Fair lips mingle in the fray, and fairy bonnets wave defiant plumes! That questions affecting the philosophy as well as the criticism of Art should have spread so far, is remarkable; but that personal feeling should have risen to this height respecting them, is still more so. And though it is gratifying to find an interest in

Art keenly prevalent, yet it must surely be acknowledged that the manner in which it is often shown implies a narrow appreciation of that wide domain; that the grounds of preference, if less individual than those of the majority, are more sectarian.

The observation of these facts has suggested an attempt to examine with you, this evening, into the nature and essential conditions of Art, its proper end and purpose, with a view to remove some of the common misapprehensions which seem to hinder its better appreciation, or place it upon false grounds; and so also to contribute to a more generous recognition of the excellences of various, and even opposing, schools, by setting forth something of a catholic basis for Art.

In attempting this, I must confess to a fear that I may be sometimes too abstract, and sometimes too technical. I can only ask your indulgence, if I trespass too far in either direction. At the same time, I shall hope to arrive eventually at some practical conclusions respecting questions which most immediately occur to an intelligent inquirer, such as—What are the distinctions between BAD ART, GOOD ART, and HIGH ART? What the position of the OLD MASTERS with respect to the MODERN? What the significance and value of MODERN PAINTING?



FAELLITISM? What the relation between PHOTOGRAPHY AND ART? What the proper course of ARTISTIC INSTRUCTION OR STUDY? What the true VOCATION OF THE ARTIST?

But to reach these, pardon me if I commence, on the very circumference of my subject, and trouble you for awhile with some of its outer and less obvious relations.

---

The first point, then, to which I would direct your attention is, the Artistic Impulse itself. To what principle of our nature does it belong? It is, I would reply, a branch of that creative instinct which we possess in virtue of our relationship to Him in whose image we are made. It is part of that perpetual effort to render the internal into the external, to express the inward thought in outward form, to make use of matter as the instrument and exponent of mind, in which every human being is more or less engaged.

It is a Divine impulse. Because it has pleased the Divine Mind itself to be thus occupied, therefore must the human mind. The child imitates the parent. What is this universe, but the expression of the Divine thought? What are all its forms and movements, but embodiments of the Divine conceptions? We call it, in common speech, the "Book of Na-

ture;" and truly so, for it is that in which we read the thought of God—the thought which He means us to read—which He has put into material form, as an utterance of Himself.

And in every human work we find a similar intention. Taking the materials which God has supplied to us, we mould them in forms and ways innumerable, after the types which exist in our minds, the conceptions we have formed there, or derived from the objects around us. We are always constructing our world, always enacting the *creator* so far as in us lies, always uttering our thought. What else is the laying out of a garden, the building of a house, the putting together of a machine, the writing of a book, but thought creating—making to itself a vehicle—putting itself into shape—communicating itself to others? Some of these things may be very necessary to do, and derive a strong inducement from the common needs of life. And there is, doubtless, a pleasure in the mere exercise of power over matter—a pleasure which explains the strange fascination experienced in acts of simple destruction, due to an impulse the very opposite, as it might seem, to that of creation, but which is on this ground related to it, or is, rather, its proper complement. That which the hand carefully puts together the hand destroys with a blow, and the sense of power is

equally satisfied. But the true nobility of creative power—the chief and highest motive to its exercise, the secret source of the pleasure experienced in doing even what the necessities of life may lay upon us—consists in the desire to express ideas, to establish a medium of communication between the outward world and the inward thought—to inscribe everything within our reach with endless hieroglyphic.

It is to this same impulse that we may trace in particular every exercise of Art. The painting of a picture, the chiselling of a statue, the design of a building, the invention of ornament, every development of the Artistic Faculty—these are all due to the creative instinct, and belong to its highest manifestations. But Art has this distinctive character, that it is not merely a putting of thought into form, as may be done without special reference to the pleasure of so doing, and without any special intention of utterance, as in building a house or laying out a garden; but it is an *intentional* act of expression, and makes explicit appeal as such. Its purpose is to express a sentiment or emotion of the mind, which sentiment or emotion, to proceed to a still closer definition, has reference to the *external forms of things*, and is dependent upon the activity of the *imagination*, as that faculty whose function it is to interpret

between the material and the spiritual world—to detect the subtle analogies which exist between form and thought.

Art, therefore, is not only the offspring of, but it is addressed to, the Imagination. This is essential to it. There is no art where this is wanting. The subject must be always such as that faculty can delight in. It must always possess some qualities which appeal to it, and of these Beauty is at once the highest and the most widely diffused throughout external Nature.

Art is thus allied to Poetry in its subject-matter, or, rather, it is a form of poetical expression. But its means differ from those of Poetry, and herein lies a further distinction. Poetry addresses itself to the mind through the agency of speech; it is addressed to the ear; for whether written or spoken, it makes no difference. The written word is only an indication or suggestion of the spoken word, and, though silently perused by the eye, strikes as an inward voice upon the ear. How else could the reader enjoy its rhyme or rhythm? Art, on the contrary, has no speech or sound; it addresses itself solely to the eye, through a suggestive imitation of the appearances of external Nature.

I say suggestive; for what I have finally to urge upon your attention is, that the imitation



is, and can be, only approximative, selective. It is based upon *compromise*, and must be in great measure *conventional*; or, to express it differently, it is an artificial means of producing the same impressions as are derived from the direct spectacle of Nature. So that Art is not only in its subject, but also in its *means*, stimulating to the imagination; for Art calls upon it to act responsively in appreciating and interpreting its language. Hence the pleasure experienced in a work of Art is threefold: There is the pleasure of original utterance, which dwells only with the Artist, and there is the imaginative excitement arising both from the character of subject presented, and from the medium through which it is presented; and this is shared in by all who can appreciate the Artist's work.

This, then, is the general view of Art which I hope to elucidate and enforce as I proceed. It comprises the three statements, which I may thus recapitulate:—*First*, Art belongs generally to that creative faculty which we inherit from God our Father. It is a language or means of expression. *Secondly*, it is an utterance addressed especially to the imagination, both as to its subject and its means. For, *Thirdly*, those means are a sort of representative shorthand—a suggestive imitation of the forms of external Nature.

But, before proceeding further, we must take up an objection which may be urged at the outset. It may be said—Is not a work of Art, instead of being as we have put it, thought rendered into substance, rather to be described as the shadow of a substance? Is it not a copy of some existing natural object? and, therefore, instead of being the realization of a conception, Is it not the image of a reality? Not exactly. It is a copy only in a certain sense. It is not a literal imitation of Nature. The means at the disposal of the Artist do not admit of that, nor is it his main intention; if it were, Madame Tussaud's waxwork ought to be accepted as good Art. Examine into the matter, and you will find that a work of Art is a transcript of the Artist's *thought concerning Nature*. It is the result of the conception he has formed of some phase of Nature. It is *his* record of the impression produced upon him, and *his* mode of communicating that impression to you.

The earliest exercise of the artistic faculty—say in a child—reveals its true nature. It is the least imitative, and exhibits the most clearly the original creative instinct. He draws, for instance, in half-a-dozen lines, a figure which we may describe generally as an oblong with a projecting excrescence at one end, and a dangling continuation at the other; four straight strokes

appropriately placed serve as legs, two more as horns. Forthwith he proclaims, with the greatest delight, that he has made a cow! and the resemblance is probably sufficient for the beholder to recognize a cow accordingly, which consummates the triumph; the idea has been communicated. It is the germ of all Art, and a purely creative act, for the child has no cow actually before him, and never thinks of copying a living individual specimen; his pleasure consists in drawing from his own conception of that animal.

Yet we do not call this production a work of Art. Why not? The reply will lead us to consider another objection which may be raised against our previous statements. If Art be, as we have said, an appeal to the imagination, by the suggestiveness rather than the literality of its representations, then it may be replied, the more that is left for the imagination to do, the better; and the slighter and ruder the work, the more effective will it be. Why, therefore, should not this be a work of Art? Bear in mind our condition, that, to affect the imagination, a work of Art must deal, in some measure, more or less with the emotions or sentiments arising from the forms of things in Nature, and so rude a resemblance as this is not an adequate representation of form. The imagination to be affected must be excited; a strong impression must be made upon

it; *some* truth must be vividly presented. Just as in poetry, the language must be choice and fitting; so must be the language of representation in which Art conveys her thought.

This effect may indeed be produced by simple as well as complicated means. *One* impression or truth conveyed, may be as effective as many. Thus in two ways might the child's representation of a cow be elevated into a work of Art. The hand of a Master might in as few lines as compose that rude sketch so express the leading forms and action of a cow, as immediately to awaken and pleurably affect the imagination. A single but a truthful impression would be made, containing the chief elements of the beauty or expressiveness of the original object. And with this condition, perhaps, the slighter the execution the more pleasurable is the result. *Or*, there is another way: The impression may be more complex, and the work of Art completer. The imagination may be challenged on a greater variety of points. Not only the general form and action, but minuter characteristics might be seized—the variegated colour, the flaccid, wrinkled, glossy skin, the lustrous eye, the moist and breathing nostril; till in proportion to the number, and variety, and vividness of these additions, so far as they did not interfere with the conveyance of the



higher and more general characteristics, would the picture of the cow become a work of Art, and in a high degree pleasurable to the imagination.

We return, however, from this digression to the child's attempt to express his cow as illustrating the nature of the original instinct—the desire to utter his thought by means of visible representation. All that follows, elevating it into a work of Art, is in the way of extension, and improvement, and refinement of the means; telling more facts about the cow, entering into the spirit and intention of Nature herself in the cow, and surrounding it with appropriate external circumstances, till it becomes an idyl, or poem, in its effect upon the imagination. And where the purpose seems to be the most literal imitation, you will yet find, on analysis, that it is the Artist's own idea of the object in question which he wishes to render permanent or to communicate. It is to be taken as his own special and peculiar utterance respecting it. Let it be but the portrait of an orange, the designer has chosen the point of view in which he will represent it, whether endways, or sideways, and he will have arranged the falling of the light, and the casting of the shadow, and he will have selected the orange whose colour best suits his fancy, or will have placed it where

its colour is most advantageously displayed. And his purpose, after all, is not to perpetuate the existence of that particular orange, but by help of that particular orange, so arranged, to perpetuate the impression it has produced, to re-excite the pleasurable emotion of his own mind regarding it, as an object agreeable in form, colour, and other associations. So that his work may still be called a creation.

But you will say—"If the portrait be that of a face, instead of an orange, the Artist is surely bound down to copy simply what he sees." Much more than that, believe me, if it is to be the portrait of the *man* to whom the face belongs. In the first place, there is, as in the case of the orange, the same selection of point of view, and of light and shadow, demanding skill and exercising choice. And, in addition, since the lines of a man's face are always in movement, and since expression is more or less flitting over his features, with all the variety and evanescence of sun and shade upon a landscape beneath a cloud-flecked sky, there is the arresting of the moving lines when they present themselves the most advantageously, or the adoption of an average which, composed in part of two or three movements, shall so suggest them all. And with respect to the expression—the selection of that which shall predominate,

or the subtle indication of the leading varieties. Much of this may be done almost unconsciously by the Artist; but it is all necessary to a good portrait, and it all results from the amount of conceptive, as well as perceptive, power he possesses. All bears the impress of his mind. It becomes the special record of his thought respecting that particular human face, and of the mysterious individuality which dwells behind it.

Take a landscape. It is the same thing. In this the point of view, the arrangement of light, and shade, and colour is everything, and these latter effects are altering every moment and with every Artist who visits the spot. What each wishes to convey is his own choice among these effects; and to perpetuate an emotion, whether of the beautiful or the sublime, or to suggest an association, historical or poetical, which has arisen in his mind, and which varies, of course, with the conceptive ability and susceptible temperament of each individual Artist.

Let me repeat, then, the Artistic intention implies something beyond imitation pure and simple. The Artist uses his imitative power to express his thought respecting some phase of the ever-shifting spectacle of Nature. His Art is his speech or book wherein he discourses upon, or sets forth, something of

the beauty of the outward world, and he relies upon your imaginative receptive power to enter into and appreciate his work—to interpret his language, to comprehend its symbols, to understand his compromises.

Let us now examine the language itself. It is, in fact, the language of Nature which the Artist adopts as his own. But how far can he adopt it? How far does he imitate? What measure of independence is allowed to Art? The replies to these questions will, I hope, appear as we proceed; and I must further premise, that our proposed survey will refer particularly to Pictorial Art, as affording the largest scope for Artistic expression.

There are three aspects of visible Nature with which the Artist deals—three parts of speech—FORM, SHADOW, and COLOUR; or, we might say, simply Form and Colour, since Shadow is, in one sense, but explanatory of Form, and, in another, but a variation in Colour. Nay, we might comprise all under the one designation of Form, as applying to all the visible qualities of things. But, for convenience sake, we may adhere to these technical distinctions, and speak first of Form, which, indeed, would be sufficient of itself to afford the illustration we require of the nature and requirements of artistic imitation.



To render Form adequately, attention is required to three points—*Character of Line*, *Proportion of Parts*, and *Organic or Constructive Unity*.

CHARACTER OF LINE. The phrase at once displays to us a technicality or conventionality in Art. For although there is no simpler, or more readily accepted, and, I may add, more immediately expressive mode of representing Form than by *outline*, *i. e.*, defining the boundaries of an object by means of a single line, yet there is no such thing as “outline” in Nature. It is a fiction. No object is in reality surrounded by a *line*; where its surface ceases, something else begins, that is all. Look at a table. There is no *line* round it; but there is something beyond it, and that defines its shape. Yet how immediately and naturally do we, as a means of imitation, represent an object by lines? How readily is the idea we wish to convey actually conveyed? It is the first effort in all drawing, and, while so manifestly imperfect on the ground of “imitation,” is capable of being the vehicle of the most intellectual efforts in Art. It can express the highest, noblest, and some of the subtlest facts in Life and Nature, so far as Art can express them at all; as witness, on the one hand, Mr. Ruskin’s illustrations of tree and mountain beauty, and, on

the other, Albert Durer's rude but expressive designs, Flaxman's sublime illustrations of Dante, Retsch's series of outlines, and, in a far lower sphere, some of the happiest efforts in caricature. See how in these a simple line, as by lightning flash, can convey the most striking characteristics of an object—the majesty of the mountain, the gracefulness of the tree, the action of an animal, the bearing and expression of a human face or figure! And yet the line itself is utterly factitious and conventional. I adduce this as an emphatic illustration of the really factitious or conventional character of all Art, considered as imitation. We must recur to the position that the imitation is subsidiary to a higher end, that it is used but as a means of appealing to, and exciting that wonderful faculty, the Imagination.

But the rendering of Form by lines, be it observed, is not confined to the boundaries. Interior markings, which have no definite precision, no sharp cut edge, are also freely rendered by lines which the eye readily accepts as sufficiently suggesting them. The line here, while still more of a fiction, is not the less effective. Delicate sinuosities of muscle, or indications of structure or texture, shadings belonging to a rounded or movable surface, are marked by a touch or a line, which tell

upon the eye adequately for the purpose, although, as an *imitation*, it is rude in the extreme. And, further, the entire surface is frequently expressed—and always in one of the most beautiful of the Arts, Line Engraving—by a complete net-work of skilfully adjusted *lines*, which inevitably, though fictitiously, suggest to the mind the nature of the surface delineated, and are, therefore, sufficient to the purposes of Art.

Many purchasers of engravings, though they hear of the superior value of line engraving, do not apprehend the reason. As a matter of price, the labour and cost required in its execution will account for it; but what renders the labour *worth while*? It is really owing to the power of lines in expressing surface, both as to form and texture. Foliage, and the stems of trees; grass, soil, rock, water; architecture, whether of stone or wood; the skin of animals; drapery, and human flesh—have all their appropriate and expressive character of line, in this noble Art; describing both the direction of the surface, whether upright, horizontal, slanted, or undulatory; and the texture, whether rough, smooth, glossy, netted, ribbed, transparent, or opaque. Here is a vast range of expression, which tint engraving cannot touch, and which demands a profound study

both of Nature and of the adaptation of line to the purpose intended. Take a high class line engraving, and there is unceasing pleasure in following the variety of surface thus expressed. Yet how singular as a means of imitation! In some slight degree texture is really imitated as in wood-work and skins of beasts; but in the majority of instances there are no corresponding lines in the thing represented. The undulating softness of flesh, for instance, is admirably given in Sir Robert Strange's works. But how? By an elaborate combination of elongated dots or short lines, crossed and re-crossed with longer lines, so as to form lozenge-shaped intervals, which again each receive their skilfully inserted dot. Manifestly this is very artificial, and yet, in a first-rate work, it excellently expresses to the eye the form and quality of flesh. So in drapery, and many other surfaces, you will discover an entirely factitious arrangement of lines, and yet an admirable *suggestion* of the object intended.

These remarks explain, in measure, what is meant by character of line; but it is desirable to look at it a little closer, and to trace to its source the pleasure it affords.

It is a curious fact, that we cannot help attributing something like moral qualities to purely physical ones. Those physical properties



of things, which render them injurious to us or disagreeable to the senses, we cannot help associating with something evil in their nature; and those which are useful to us, or agreeable to the senses, we equally associate with an inherent goodness or amiability of disposition. Now, we find the forms of things to vary according to the physical properties they possess. This relation is almost universal, and so Form itself becomes intimately connected in our minds with good or evil qualities. It is endowed with a moral character of its own. So much so, that we can hardly look at a crooked piece of wood without attributing to it an unhappy perversity of temper, or a smooth tree-stem without associating it with a happy unruffled disposition. And from regarding special forms from a moral aspect, we come to attribute a moral meaning to abstract forms; to lines and shapes as such, that have no relation to any actual object; and a simple pencil stroke, whether crooked, straight, or curved, becomes instinct with moral life. Lines thus become a language, and raise an answering emotion of satisfaction, or the contrary, in our minds. Every bend, or curve, or straightness carries its nice shade of meaning—has about it an undefinable, but no less certain expressive-

ness, and is accordingly agreeable or disagreeable to the eye.

The reason of all this can be found nowhere short of the profound relations between mind and matter. It must be traced to that mysterious analogy or sympathy between the spiritual and the material, which renders the one everlastingly the exponent and vehicle of the other. The two are inextricably woven together; so that thought cannot shape itself in the mind without deriving that shape from without, still less can mind, deprived of that aid, make any utterance of itself. It is owing to this intimate *adjustment*, that we use terms applicable alike to the perceptions of the senses, the conceptions of the intellect, or to moral emotions. So that we speak of the rough and smooth, the hard and soft, whether it be an object of sight, hearing, touch, a mental conception, or a disposition of the affections to which we refer. Or we say a man is upright, whether we intend his soul or his body; or fallen, whether from a physical or a moral standing. But, being so related, it is yet not difficult to see which of the two has the deepest source—which of the two moulds the other to its uses. Moral emotions are, as it were, the senses of the soul, and we should find, I think, upon sufficient investigation, that

all impressions from external Nature, upon the bodily senses, are ultimately agreeable or repulsive, according to the analogy they present with the higher spiritual emotions. So that, in fine, moral emotion is the true ground or basis of all being. And must it not be so? for what is this but saying that the deep fountain of all existence is the very heart of God? And then it may well be that the entire universe should be but one great mind writing, one interminable series of symbolic character written by the Divine hand for the mental and moral education of His children.

It is not, then, without reason that we apply the word "beautiful" so variously—that we speak of a beautiful truth, a beautiful action, or a beautiful form. For Beauty, Truth, and Goodness are, in their innermost nature, *one*. If they come to us broken and disjointed, it is an enemy who hath done this. It is not so in the eternal order of things; but Beauty rests upon Truth, and Truth upon Goodness, in the glorious edifice of Nature. These three divine attributes are, indeed, addressed especially to three distinct faculties; and Beauty it is the special function of Imagination to apprehend;—Beauty, in this sense, symbolizing the highest, purest Good, towards which all Nature culminates, and including, therefore, all her variety of aspect. But the

range of expression in Nature is not limited to the beautiful ; it runs parallel to the entire range of human emotion, and Imagination reads throughout the wondrous scroll. It everywhere extracts, from the outward forms and facts of Nature, the higher truths they symbolize ; or, reversing the process, clothes the spiritual with the material—giving an embodiment to thought. It alternately deduces from the visible fact, the invisible symbol, and renders back the symbol into bodily shape. This double office it is performing always in Poetry, and, under different and more limited means of expression, in Art. That the language of Art is confined to the presentation of actual shapes and colours, does not affect the correctness of this statement as to the thought intended to be expressed.

And now, returning to our subject, we say that the Artist is, in this sense, also creative—that he works with forms as God has worked with them. That he deals with an original property of visible things—their power to symbolize thought—to suggest or awaken emotion. That he speaks, in fact, in his Art, a truly primeval and universal language. But, to do this effectively, he must study with diligence and care in the school of Nature. He must observe and seize her nicest shades of meaning—the delicacies of expression which belong to every




turn and fold of Form. He must learn to analyze and dissect every line by which it is described with the exactest discrimination. This process will resolve itself into an accurate appreciation of the *straight* and the *curved*, as the two essential elements of which every line is composed. All the mystery and beauty of abstract Form lies in the union of these two; and how dull to this beauty is the uninstructed eye! How little does it note the exquisite counterpoise of these two components, or the subtle blending in which alliance, strength, and grace are married together! A merely curved or bending line suggests only feebleness, purposelessness—a straight one is rigid and unmeaning; but a combination of the two becomes instantly of living purport, an inexhaustible source of diversified expression.

The comparison of Masculine with Feminine form is very instructive on this point. The straighter lines of the Masculine, yet not devoid of curve; the more curving lines of the Feminine, yet not without admixture with the straight; the choicest exhibition of which may be seen in those wonderful ideals of Greek Art, the Apollo and the Venus. But though it is in human forms that we find the perfection of line as to this subtle and exquisite combination, in the horse it is scarcely less so. The

resemblance of the monkey to humanity is sometimes spoken of, but it consists in the grossest caricature. There is no resemblance in any of the higher elements of Form. The horse, on the contrary, possesses genuine human lines of beauty—approaching the masculine rather than the feminine, inferior only as the lines are straighter and more rigid, but still tempered in the most admirable manner with the curve. Trees, plants, rocks, mountains, and the ocean-wave, all attract the curious eye by the variety, the beauty, the expressiveness of their lines; and, of all works of human hands, the ship, which rules the waves by virtue of its adoption of their own flowing yet vigorous curves. To detect and transmit in the lines which describe objects, this delicate, complex character is the first demand upon the skill of the Artist, as it is one of his chief delights.

But besides the character of each individual line, a great source of pleasure to the eye is found in the *opposition* or *combination* of lines. It is difficult to assign the reason of this pleasure, except as it results from that same sense of balance, counterpoise, compensation, which is derived from the association of straight with curved lines. The opposition of different degrees

of inclination, the compensation for a long *ascent* by a steep *descent*, as thus,  is itself a gratification to the eye. The meeting of lines at any but right angles is another, which is probably owing to a delight in the intricate and complex. No eye takes pleasure in a square, or a net-work of squares, unless they be so broken as to produce an effect of intricacy. A lozenge-shaped interval is, on the contrary, immediately agreeable, especially if combined with the curve in its contour, as in the interstices of Gothic tracery. If we derive this pleasure from a suggestion of the varied and irregular in Nature, the question still remains—Why is it pleasing to us *there*? Why are the interlacing branches of a tree against a winter-sky delightful? It can, as I believe, only be referred to those recondite sympathies upon which we have already dwelt.

But the pursuit of this topic will lead us too far. It is sufficient for the present purpose to have directed attention to the amount of interest which lies in abstract Form alone, apart from the further expressiveness which arises from the uses or ends which it subserves in each individual object, and which we must presently consider. Character of line is one of the first secrets of artistic perception—one of the chief

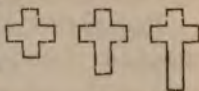
elements of the Picturesque—the first component in all beautiful Form.

PROPORTION OF PARTS must next claim our attention. Beauty of Proportion depends upon exact mathematical relations. Like music, it is connected with the principle of number, which Pythagoras affirmed to be the principle of all things. This inseparable connection has been fully illustrated by an examination of those most perfect specimens of Proportion, the architectural remains of Greece. Proportion implies *difference*, and yet *unity*. The relation of difference, or unity in diversity, is a pervading law of Nature, and the perception of it is always a source of pleasure; resulting, we may suppose, as in regard to other properties of Form, from the same deep harmony between physical and spiritual existence.

To confine ourselves, however, simply to the fact: Certain it is that equality of parts does not please the eye, still less does a total inequality; while a certain relation between differing members does produce a pleasurable sensation. If the difference be too small, there is too much unity; if the difference be too great, unity is destroyed. Take as an illustration the simple form of the cross. It may be varied in two ways. As to the length of the transverse bar, and as to its position with re-



ference to the upright limb : An exact equality between the two possesses none of the charm of Proportion ; *that* commences as we vary these, as thus—



Where the adjustment is most perfect is matter for nice discrimination. But it has been observed that the artistic taste, which so eminently distinguishes the Italian people, is shown as much in the way in which a peasant will tie two sticks together to form a roadside memorial, as in the universal appreciation of the higher forms of Art. The mutual adjustment of the two limbs of the cross will be always regulated by the nicest sense of the beauty of Proportion. With us there is no such generally diffused artistic sense. It requires, with most, some amount of education of eye to acquire it. But nowhere is this characteristic deficiency more lamentably apparent than among our ordinary class of builders—those cruel builders—who daily massacre the innocent forms of Art ! and who, did they but heed it, might, in the simple matter of Proportion, make all the difference between deformity and grace without a sixpence of extra cost. In arrangement and design of doors, windows, chimneys, and relation of roof to wall, Proportion might be observed, if nothing else ; and so

far, at least, the attempt might be made to construct in harmony with the eternal laws of the beautiful. So might we work, according to our measure, worthily of the Great Artificer, by whose perfect workmanship we are surrounded, instead of presenting, as we do, the most jarring contrasts to the harmony of Nature. Why should man's work look like a blot upon God's work? Why should we so abjure our birth-right? To build, if rightly thought of, is to exercise a noble faculty of construction, whether it be cottage, factory, or palace. But for builder, the term bricklayer would in most cases be more appropriate, since the only object seems to be to superimpose brick upon brick, leaving certain holes here and there for light and egress.

There is an important relation of Proportion to *fitness*, introducing numberless modifications, a source therefore of constant variety, and illustrating remarkably the moral base of all beauty. It is sufficient to refer now to that abstract pleasure in related difference of parts which it is a function of Art to satisfy. Nature, for this purpose, is a mine of wealth. Proportion reigns throughout all her capriciousness of form—in the parts of a leaf, or a flower, in the limbs of a tree, or of an animal. Art unfolds this beauty, and is bound to work in sympathy with it.

whether as guiding to the choice or arrangement of an object, or in working out independent conceptions of form, as in architectural and ornamental design. It requires, as it were, a larger eye—a wider scope of vision—to discern and render Proportion, than to follow Character in line; and many fail in the former, who in the latter may have attained some proficiency. Yet nothing is more important to the true rendering of any natural object. No defect is more fatal, nothing more immediately betrays the absence of artistic power, or its want of cultivation. Let those who would draw, rigorously exercise themselves in the observation of this vital constituent of all beauty in Composite Form.

But an important modification of Form, as it is presented to the eye, is yet to be noticed in *Perspective*, or “Foreshortening,” as it is called, when applied to the limbs of animals. To many, “Perspective” suggests only a system of perplexing rules; and if to draw in perspective were not necessary, as they are told it is, they think they could draw very well. They seem not to be aware that an inability to see simply what is before them is implied in the difficulty of drawing in perspective; since it is only required to see an object as it really appears from the point of view in which we stand, to

draw perfectly in perspective. This illustrates an important function of the Artist, as well as of the man of science, to observe truly, *unbiassed* by previous conceptions. This "innocence of eye," as Ruskin calls it, is the great secret for unveiling the beauty as well as the operations of Nature. The eye, in this case of perspective, is biassed by the abstract knowledge of the mind. The mind has learnt to know that, whatever the appearance may be, a house *is* square—that the lines of roof and basement *are* parallel—the eye therefore can no longer see it otherwise. It cannot recognize the fact that, when seen sideways, the two lines of roof and basement approach each other as they recede from the spectator. So, also, because a limb is known to be long and slender, the eye cannot see at once that when viewed *end-on* it is reduced to a ball, or irregular lump. Yet, if knowledge, or a prior conviction, thus blinds the eye, it is equally true that knowledge helps to open it; and this is one use of Perspective as a system of rules. It is a guide to accurate perception. When once the mind thoroughly understands why, and in what degree, the shapes of things vary according to the point of view, then the eye readily perceives the fact. This influence of knowledge, as a guide and revealer to the eye, is an instructive fact,



further to be noticed. Here, in the matter of Perspective, is one only of its illustrative instances.

Meanwhile, inasmuch as all Form, both in the character of its Lines, and in its Proportions, is essentially altered according to the point of view from which it is seen, it is obvious how necessary it is to have the attention constantly awake to this circumstance. Many a curious secret of Form will thus be exposed, many an entanglement of lines unravelled, many an opportunity will be afforded for modifying forms so as to improve their combinations by some slight change of position, enlarging thus greatly the field of choice and power of selection to the Artist. And, finally, Perspective is not only essential to truth of representation, but it possesses great power over the Imagination. By means of it, a few skilfully arranged lines on a few inches of paper, will suggest the spaces, depths, and distances of the largest landscape; or, in a vast interior, Belshazzar shall be seen feasting with a thousand, nay, ten thousand of his lords; or, a battle-plain shall be covered with its dim and countless myriads. Imagination seizes upon the cue supplied by Perspective, and readily completes what the literal hand of Art is unable to portray.



But we now approach the THIRD and most important consideration connected with the observation of Form. We have touched upon Character of Line, and Proportion of Parts; there lies beyond these an apprehension of the ORGANIC UNITY of the object itself. The appreciation of this measures the genius of the Artist. We may compare character of line and proportion of parts to the notes of music; in themselves pleasurable to the ear, and with a certain suggestiveness to the imagination; but the art of the musical composer consists in the arrangement and subordination of these into an expressive whole. So in pictorial Art, the innate beauty of line, or of proportion, is vague and indefinite without *organic union*, unless they are seen as parts of a whole; *then* the true relation and purpose of each line and proportion are seen, and a *fact* is set before the mind, a *history* is told, a *poem* is written upon the canvas. Take a congeries of gracefully sweeping and opposed lines, and they mean nothing; but place them in a certain connection, and they become rolling, tumbling, bounding waves, and all the majesty, mystery, and changefulness of the sea is put before you. Or take two lines of good opposing curves, but lying in meaningless juxtaposition; unite them by a skilful touch, and you have created a mountain

form, rearing its massive bulk upon the horizon, and instinct with that passive power which impresses the mind so strongly. Both these are instances of isolated forms bound in a living unity.

Lines and proportions thus brought into expressive relation, it is obvious, are endowed with a new and a higher beauty. A thought is attached to them—they rise in value. It is now not merely the character of the line itself, or of the proportion, which is the source of pleasure, but the relation of that line and that proportion to the character of the object to which they belong. Purpose is revealed, and the relation of Fitness comes into view, satisfying by the analogy it bears to a high moral requirement.

This relation of Fitness increases the scope and range of the beautiful both in lines and proportions. That which, abstractly considered, may seem not so good a line as another, becomes admirable when seen in connection with an ultimate intention. The jagged and abrupt twists of the lines in an oak branch may not be so beautiful in themselves as those of the birch or ash; but as parts of an organic whole, whose character is eminently expressive of sturdy vigour, and as mechanically fitted to that end, they have a fresh and independent

value, and become in a high degree grateful to the eye. And so it is especially with Proportion. Its relation to Fitness, its adaptation to an end, afford it infinite variety and scope. Proportions which are specially adapted for purposes of strength, of movement, or of flexibility please for that reason. Hence, beauty of proportion is displayed under the most varied conditions in the forms of animals, plants, and trees. And hence also the diversity of beautiful proportion in architecture, according to the purpose of the building, or simply in accordance with the idea or sentiment intended to be expressed :—as in the Egyptian, Doric, or early Gothic, for strength, solidity, and graver uses; Ionic, Corinthian, Saracenic, for lightness, grace, and purposes of less serious import. But it should be observed, that while appropriate expression and fitness to an end enlarge the range of good proportion, they are not sufficient of themselves to produce it. This must be ever borne in mind, otherwise the fact of a thing answering its purpose would alone render it beautiful, which is far from being the case.

There is, then, in this subordination of lines and proportions to *organic unity*, a new and higher sphere of observation for the Artist. And to seize the entire character of an object,

or its highest and most impressive phase, must be his chief effort, as it is that which really supplies the measure, as we have said, of his Artistic faculty. It demands a peculiar sensibility to the impressions which external Nature is fitted to produce, and a power to grasp and emphasize the predominant and ruling sentiment.

Practically it depends, in the first place, like the perception of proportion, upon a large and comprehensive *eye*, which lays hold of the object in its *entireness*; in the relation of its parts, and the bearing of its principal lines; and especially as regards the general balance of the whole—its lines of equipoise and weight if it be stationary, or those which express its direction, and force, and mode of movement, if it be moving. But the eye must be helped by knowledge. As, for instance, there must be a sufficient understanding of the composition or texture of an object, what sort of substance it is—whether vapoury, filmy, and diffusive as a cloud; cohesive, transparent, and flowing as water; fibrous and elastic as wood; fragile and polished as leaves; solid, unyielding, and weighty as rocks and soil. These facts, from distance or other causes, may not be immediately obvious to the eye, but the knowledge of them guides the hand to many subtleties of expression it



would otherwise miss. Again, there must be a knowledge of, or, if I may say it, a sympathy with, the living purpose of the thing—what it is doing, what the end it subserves. We may speak of a living purpose in this sense, however inanimate the object; as in the aspiring, outstretching character of the tree, seeking light and air; or in the onward rush and broken rebound of the wave; or even in the passive resistance of the rock; in the precipice, bearing backward with its mighty shoulders, or in the mountain peak, sustaining itself aloft. Further, it is necessary there should be a watchful observation of the record of Time as it is written upon all things—developing their story, telling the history of their subjection to mundane influences. This record is read in what Mr. Ruskin well calls “the awful lines,” for they reveal the changeful fortunes of the Past and the fate of the Future. A susceptibility to the pensive charm of mutability here greatly aids the eye and guides the cunning hand. It points out how the tree has suffered from the storms of many winters; how the bank wears and caves from the rushing floods; how the wall is crumbling with age; how the human face answers to the passions and emotions, the joys and the sorrows which have agitated its features. And, finally, there must be an appreciation



of the general sentiment which attaches to an object—the leading emotion it is fitted to produce—the idea it symbolizes; as of power, in action or repose; the gay, the graceful, or magnificent, the tender, or the stern. The Poet sees in all Nature a reflex of human emotion, and so must the Painter. He must live and breathe in unison with the mysterious life of Nature, and sympathize with all her moods, if he is to be her interpreter and minister.

It will be remarked how, in all these points necessary to an adequate presentation of Form in its *entirety*, the Imagination is appealed to. The Imagination derives pleasure from the mere character and relation of lines and proportions, but immeasurably *more* where the character, living purpose, and history of an object are put before it. And of these perhaps none move it more than the history. A ruined wall or decayed tree is eminently “picturesque,” because the hand of Time is traced there; and it is in proportion as these higher relations of Form to life and purpose, the past and the future, are dwelt upon, that an object is poetically rendered.

But you will observe that the adequate portrayal of any object requires knowledge. We touched upon this fact before, in explaining the use of a knowledge of Perspective. And

we may say emphatically, no man can delineate correctly what he does not understand. It is astonishing what little real power of imitation is possessed apart from an inward enlightenment as to the nature of the thing to be imitated. A man does not notice the changes produced by Perspective till he is aware of them. He cannot draw correctly a living limb till he has learnt to know what and where are the muscles upon which its movements depend. He must have observed the principles of growth in trees and plants before he can set on the branches of the one or the leaves of the other. Mountain forms are simpler, but a knowledge of geological formation and history will help him to many an unobserved secret of form. All this illustrates forcibly one of our original positions—the essential dependence of Art upon mental conception—upon possession of an idea. It shows how mere imitation, in the sense of following slavishly what may be before the eye, must necessarily be tame and feeble, since the bodily eye can read but little. It is the mental eye which must be active, and then the result is vivified through its electric contact with mind, and becomes a record or utterance of its emotions.

But every utterance has a definite end. If a thought is to be uttered, the attention must

be concentrated upon that thought. Expression demands *emphasis*, or a prominence of some parts over others. If an idea is to be conveyed, a truth to be exhibited, it must to some extent be isolated. Every vehicle of thought is under this condition, and Art no less. Whatever the Artist has learnt or felt he must emphasize it in delineation, if he means to impress it upon others. If he has seized a ruling idea—if he is under the influence of a paramount impression—he must make it paramount in his work. It may be said such a ruling sentiment, if prevalent in the natural scene, would assuredly develop itself in any truthful representation. But it is the Artist's peculiar function to see what others do not see, or do not see without his aid—to open the eyes of others as his own have been opened by the gift of Artistic genius. He has to select some phase of Nature, and to draw forth its appropriate emotion. And to do this he must so dwell upon the point he wishes to enforce, as to urge it upon the attention. He must, to some extent, exaggerate the centre of interest, or subordinate that which surrounds it. There is a necessity for this, arising from the inadequacy of the means at the disposal of Art to render but at humble distance the boundless spectacle of Nature, compelling the Artist therefore to confine himself within a narrow range

of selection. But leaving this for the present, it is sufficient here to say that the necessities of *expression* demand it, while at the same time it is not really so untrue to fact as it seems. For the eye sees only that to which its attention is directed. If you look at an object, you scarcely see at all that which is beside it, and the less in proportion to the interest with which the object itself inspires you. Even in a single object you will see only that part of it which particularly arrests you. If, then, the Artist wishes to arouse the attention with respect to any point, and makes it predominate in delineation, he is only forestalling the prominence which excited interest will itself bestow. Yet this procedure is frequently adduced as an untruth in Art by those who not only forget the compromises to which Art must submit from the nature of its materials, but who fail to appreciate the conditions of expression.

This is the difficulty which is felt by many with respect to that, to them, distasteful mode of treatment—the Ideal. They prefer what they call the *real*. Yet ideal treatment is not necessarily the less real. It is simply the conveyance of the highest truth about an object, or the preference of some particular tone of sentiment. To do this, the attention must be concentrated upon it; and Art possesses no other means of



accomplishing this than a degree of exaggeration, on the one hand, or of subordination on the other. If it be an ideal of Form which is in question, as we are just now concerned with Form, those characters of Line, of Proportion, and of the compacted whole, will be dwelt upon, which express particularly the desired attribute or sentiment. As, for strength, the lines will be emphatically abrupt, the proportions massy. For beauty, the lines and proportions in which beauty most consists will be especially dwelt upon. And, as a natural result of this process, there will follow *generalization*—another word of reproach to Art. Generalization avoids or softens individualities of form; because, if individual form be too conspicuous, it may interfere with or encumber the general impression which is sought to be made. Generalization avoids certain specialities of time or place, because those specialities may interfere with the sentiment to be conveyed. Generalization omits facts, but it omits them only that it may the more vividly present others. Let me digress a moment to contrast the two modes of treatment in an instance with which many will be familiar. The subject shall be the Apostle Peter, at the moment of receiving his pastoral charge. An individualist would represent him in all the squalor of a dripping, half-naked fisherman. He



looks upon him simply as a man so employed, then and there, on the shore of the Galilean sea. The idealist, on the contrary, takes into his view the entire conception of the apostolic office, and regards him not as he was at one particular moment, but in the light of his whole life, as the heaven-commissioned teacher and guide of men—a grand ecclesiastical figure of the past—and as such he depicts him, untrue to the circumstances of the moment, but true to the character and office of the man. And through such apparent untruth only, be it observed, could Art suggest to the mind the fact that the fisherman was also the apostle. If the individuality of the time, place, and figure had been strictly observed, there would have been seen the fisherman only; and there would have needed some attached label or subscription to say, “this is an apostle.” In the language of Art, this information could only be conveyed by means of an ideal instead of a realistic form—of a generalization instead of an individuality.

Those who are acquainted with the current literature of Art will perceive that I have here made brief reference to the treatment of a subject by Mr. Ruskin, on the one hand, and by Raffaele on the other; and I would claim for the latter, not only the expression of a higher

truth, but would also say, that his ideal treatment is that which the very nature of Art, as appealing to the imagination through outward form alone, and as obliged to tell all she has to tell without speech or sound, absolutely imposes upon him.

An idealization is, then, I would urge, not only a result of that highest effort of Art which grasps a subject in its entirety—in its typical conception—in its predominating tendencies—in its subtlest relations to the spirit-world—it is also a necessity of expression. When the Artist neglects or subordinates what is not essential to this primary conception, he is not necessarily false to his Art. He is the rather true to her highest functions. "Poetry," says Aristotle, "is a thing more philosophical and weightier than history." And the Artist is gifted, like the Poet, to elevate the fact into a higher region. But while vindicating idealization, it must nevertheless be borne in mind, that in nothing is the skill of the Artist so displayed as in what and how far he idealizes. What he thus emphasizes should be the highest fact about an object, and that which more than anything else expresses its character, its purpose, or its history. And he should never so emphasize as to destroy that unity and harmony which prevail throughout Nature.

We have found in Form alone sufficient illustration of the Scope and Purpose of Art, and as SHADOW and COLOUR only elucidate further the same principles, we may treat them with comparative brevity.

It may be useful, however, as well as interesting, to bestow a little attention upon these two subjects of artistic study. Much misjudgment of Art results from ignorance of the matters with which it has to deal—from want of acquaintance with those varied aspects of Nature which it seeks to portray. Not to be wondered at, indeed, since it is only the *Artist's* special business to make himself acquainted with them, but which, as it is so, should lead us not too hastily to reject the transcript he renders.

With respect to SHADOW, for instance—for we may assume the presence of Light, without which Shadow could not exist—with respect to Shadow, how many are there who seem never to have recognized its existence! It is well known that a great queen refused to allow a particle of anything so obnoxious to invade the fairness of her cheeks. But she does not stand alone. In the earliest efforts of Art it is always ignored, a point which the modern admirers of Mediævalism have duly imitated. And how numerous are the Elizabethans at the present day, who criti-

cize the dark patch under the nose with a familiar allusion to snuff! How perplexing to many is the smutch that seems to soil the spotless purity of the shirt-front! How bewildering the discovery that a black coat is not pitch black all over! While, again, many a fair hand employs laborious finish upon a group of flowers, imitating every blush and streak of their emulous complexions, but utterly oblivious of the shadows which shelter among their leaves.

Let me, then, say a few words upon this important fact in visible Nature. Shadows may be classed in two ways—as to their Position and their Quality. In *Position*.—First, the shadows belonging to an object in itself, resulting from its own varieties of surface. Secondly, those it throws *from* itself on the ground or anything immediately adjacent. And, thirdly, those which are thrown upon *it* by something more or less distant. All these shadows differ in character, and so demand distinctive treatment, which may be seen as we pass to the varieties of *Quality*.

Of these there are *Total Shadows*, *Partial Shadows*, and Shadows invaded by *reflections*. The total shadows are rare in Nature, and exist chiefly in small isolated patches, for light is so diffused—reflected from so many points—that almost any mass of shadow is sure to be dis-



turbed and broken. The shadows which fall from an object on the ground, or whatever may be in immediate contact, present the most frequent examples of total shadow. The most interesting, therefore, to the Artist, because the most varied and numerous, are the modified shadows, resulting either, as just stated, from reflection, or from a surface being turned obliquely to the light, and so not subjected to its full force; these are technically termed half-shadows, and here occurs, especially in rounded surfaces, the soft beauty of *gradation*, a grace which it requires an instructed eye and a delicate hand adequately to render.

The uses of Shadow are manifold. We may enumerate these—To explain and define Form—to diversify Surface—to aid unity of Expression—and to affect directly the Imagination.

In *explaining* or *defining Form*, Shadow gives what painters call *relief*, that is, projection. Perspective does, indeed, suggest relief; but as soon as Shadow is added, the eye recognizes far more readily, roundness, solidity, and, consequently, projection. Many varieties of surface, also, can only be indicated by the Shadow, however slight, which attends them. While, again, as the Shadow which is cast by one object upon another varies in shape with the shape of both, this is another indication of Form. Take, for



instance, the Shadow of a chair, which strikes partly on the floor and partly on a wall, or of a cloud upon broken country. The complexities in either case are so great, that they require great precision and skill to follow them, but they are of much importance in explaining Form. Shadow, again, aids in defining Form where it is thrown behind an object—a dark background to an illuminated surface, as where the figure of a man is seen in sunlight in front of a dark gateway. But we must not dilate upon the numerous ways in which Shadow helps to render Form. The last-mentioned instance, however, leads me to refer to a variety of treatment of which the greatest masters afford us examples, because it illustrates the scope there is for choice and management in this matter. One method of relieving an object, say the head, in a portrait, is to place a background Shadow against the light side only of the head, while its own shadowed side tells against a light part of the background; here, you see, light and darkness are expressly opposed with very obvious effect. But another method is not so obvious; it consists in placing the background darkness in contact with the *dark* side of the head, and joining also light with light. Yet this, by extending and massing both the lights and the shadows, is no less effective, and possesses,

as we shall presently see, a peculiar artistic merit.

A second use is to *diversify surface*. Here shadows are viewed simply as so many shapes or blotches, which may be good or bad in composition, just as their lines and proportions arrange themselves. It is evident that the actual shadows of objects may fall into disagreeable shapes or combinations; but the Artist, by virtue of his Art, must counteract this, if it occur, either by different choice of subject, of position, of time of day, by use of reflections, or of those shadows which do not belong to an object, but are thrown *upon* it. This last is a very valuable expedient, admitting, as it does, of much convenient adjustment, because an object may almost always be *supposed*, which, though out of sight, shall yet cast its shadow within the sphere of vision. Clouds which are not visible may yet manifest their presence in this way, breaking up some awkward space in a landscape; or a window, or wall, may be supposed, unseen, but diversifying the shadows upon a figure in a room. Such are legitimate methods of varying and distributing the shadows in a picture, so that they shall shape and group themselves agreeably to the eye. But their proper use is a test of artistic ability. The expedients resorted to may be too obtrusive, and

equally betray a want of Art; and the highest Art is sometimes shown in abandoning them altogether for the sake of some keen incisive effect of truth upon the spectator.

Shadows *aid greatly the unities of expression*. Here we approach those higher ends which are the ultimate aim of Art. Shadow ennobles Form, by bringing out its larger and more imposing features, and obscuring the meaner or less important. This is a mode of generalization which the historical and portrait painter will often adopt, and one requiring no falsification of fact—only the exercise of choice. The solid masses of Shadow which can be obtained by adjusting the access of light, give dignity to features which cross and diffused lights would fritter into insignificance; and folds of drapery, by the same treatment, become rich and full. Mass, or what is technically termed *breadth*, it is a special province of Shadow to effect. It is a simplicity which the eye rests upon with satisfaction—an impressive species of *emphasis*—it is a gathering under one, or a few, heads the principal *motives* of a subject. A concentration of attention, it is evident, Shadow can readily effect, by simply contracting the space upon which the eye, and consequently the attention, is directed. Rembrandt's method of plunging everything in darkness excepting

the one head, or figure, or group which forms his subject, will immediately occur to many of you. *Such* a use of Shadow can only be allowed once in a way to transcendant genius; but without making the intention so apparent, Shadows may be excellently employed to intensify expression, either in the manner just referred to, by contracting the surface of illumination, or by enforcing certain points with blots and dashes of dark, or, again, by the impressiveness of solemn reposing masses. Such expedients are part of the *art of speech* to which the Artist is entitled. They belong to him as gifted to re-dispose and adjust the effects of Nature, which he does not imitate as a parrot does sounds, but uses for rational discourse.

But *Shadow especially and directly affects the imagination*. It lays hold upon it by reason of its inherent mystery and pathos. The spell of mystery is potent upon the human spirit. Born, as it is, of the unseen—passing onward to the unseen—hovering between two unknowns—the illimitable depths of space and time enveloping it on every side—it is ever agitated with wonder and curiosity. The cry is ever—“Behind the veil! behind the veil!” Now the analogy which subsists between darkness and the unknown is very obvious, and has found expression in all languages. The metaphorical



use of Shadow in this respect is abundant—the valley of the *shadow* of death; The *darkness* of the grave; the *darkness* of the future; the *night* of death; and it is the strange fascination of curious, though baffled inquiry, excited by actual obscurity, which renders Shadow so apt a symbol. No less appropriate, however, is the *pathos* which dwells in Shadow. Light, life, and joy seem correlative terms. As light decays, a sense of loss, of regret, of sadness undefinable, steals upon the soul, activity ceases, and the sources of delight are stopped. Shadow, therefore, is pathetic, and thus again makes appeal to the sensitive imagination, which keeps house in broad day, and while laughter assails the doors, but opens readily at the soft approach of sadness in the twilight. As the type of mystery, and of melancholy, therefore, Shadow sways the soul. The cathedral porch—the cavern mouth—the pathway sinking into forest depths—the jaws of the rocky defile—solicit while they quell. And grandly will the Shadows speak to him who from some alpine summit, as the sun declines, watches them settle down, large, and dark, and still, over the heaving landscape, filling the chasms with a purple flood, and swathing the hills in darkness. The poet knows well how to call Shadow to his aid in troops of metaphors, and the Artist-poet



may surely, therefore, dip his brush in sombre tints, and work what charm he can. No wonder, then, that so many of the great painters have been great in the power of darkness. If they have ruled the day with gorgeous colours, they have known how to rule the night also, and summon her with all her sorceries. Let us not complain of occasional exaggerations. Let us not carp at sweeping glooms, and gathered thunders, and obscuring mists, and impenetrable depths, but accept them as the reflex of emotion, and the emphasis of expression. Let us not grudge the Artist his solemn basses and plaintive minors. Let us grant him his organ, and his trumpet-note, and yield to the mood he would inspire.

COLOUR next claims our brief attention.

It is the final charm in Nature, but in saying this we do not mean that it is the highest. The pleasure derived from Colour is of a less intellectual character than that derived from Form. Colour carries less meaning. It appeals to a specific sense of enjoyment, not so immediately to the imagination. It affects the organ of sight as sound does the ear, or as taste the palate; and although these senses lie in deep connection with the structure of the mind, which again is based upon the still profounder struc-

ture of the soul, the analogies do not suggest themselves so readily as in the case of Form. Colour appears as an added grace, a bountiful addition to the avenues of delight. It floods the world with an obvious and immediate beauty, liable, like all sensuous beauty, to supersede the higher beauty of thought and emotion; and, indeed, so seductive, that it has always been found by the Artist a too ready means of hiding a multitude of sins.

Yet, although Colour, from the lower grade it occupies, possesses a larger, and readier popular appreciation, the popular eye has but vague notions with regard to it. The ordinary conception respecting Colour is confined to *bright* Colours. A separate and effective brilliance is its first requisite, as in the gayest flowers, or gems. Afterwards a certain amount of gradation is recognized, and with increasing admiration under the endearing term of softness; but beyond this, ordinary observation does not extend.

The Artist must go further. It is his function and pleasure to do so. He has to dissect, to analyze, the modes in which Colours present themselves; and he has to use them as Nature uses them, ascending to her highest and most refined shades of meaning in the adjustment of this her glorious robe.

It is not, then, the brilliance of Colours

which attracts the Artist so much as their disposition and modifications. Nor does Nature herself deal except sparingly with bright Colours. She knows, indeed, their value, but distributes them in vivid specks, her masses are made up of deeper and softer *tones*, and in these alone reside her higher powers of expression. Her gay Colours she sprinkles on flowers, insects, birds, and threads of cloud; her quiet tints she spreads over the woods and rocks, mountains, and sweeping plains, the sea, and vault of heaven. It is these tones and harmonies which the Artist dwells upon just as being the most expressive—Colours subdued or modified.

Of these modifications we may enumerate the following:—Gradation—Opposition—Shadow—Reflection—Transparency—and Atmosphere.

*Gradation* possesses such an obvious charm that, as we have observed, it attracts attention from the most superficial observers. Wonder is the first emotion excited by the surpassing delicacy of gradation in the tints of Nature, but it soon touches a higher faculty of delight in the ethereal qualities it displays—in the utterly imperceptible transitions, the indivisibility, which obscurely link it with ideas of infinitude; and in the tender preciousness suggested by its seeming evanescence. The bloom on fruit, the soft hues of flowers, the blush of a

fair cheek, or the fading tints of an evening sky, all partake of an ineffable loveliness, never exciting to the mind, but soothing and purifying. Mortal hand cannot effect such gradations, but it must do what it can, though with ever due regard to the still higher demands of ultimate expression.

The effect of *Contrast* upon Colours, when two or more are placed in immediate opposition, makes itself so evident in dress and furniture that few are ignorant of certain maxims of arrangement. *As* few, however, experience the full charm of happy contrast, and none but the Artist sees in it a means by which to compensate for the dulness of his pigments, compared with the glow and richness of Nature's sunlit colours. By a little exaggeration of the cooler tints, or skilful support of colours, he can persuade the eye into almost any conviction. The heightening or subduing power of contrast is one of the great secrets of his Art. Its more extensive use in composition we must notice presently.

We have already remarked upon the frequency with which *Shadow* itself is overlooked; it is not surprising, therefore, that its effect upon colours should be generally unobserved. When recognized at all, it is commonly supposed simply to darken Colour; but this is a loose



notion—it really expunges Colour. The proper colour of an illuminated object disappears where shadow comes upon it, and not only so, but another appears in its stead, the opposite of that displaced. If the illuminated colour is warm the shadow will be cool, varying from grey to positive blue, or purple, and even crimson, which is on the cold side compared with orange and rich green. If the illuminated surface is cool, as in moonlight, the shadows will be warm and brown. Shadows among colours introduce a delicious tenderness and variety of neutral tones, but other influences combine for this, the most potent of which are—

The *Reflections* which invade shadows. These carry with them the tints of the surface from which they come: hence the blueness of many shadows which receive the reflected light of the sky, and the warmth of a shadowed wall against which the ground tints strike. But other than shadowed spaces are thus affected; observe the sea receiving on its bosom all the hues of the sky, or the still lake returning those of its shores, or the pool enriched with the colours of its shelving bank and overhanging trees. Such reflections are exquisite in their translucent play. But all things in the glow of daylight return each others colours wherever their relative positions admit of it. So that



colour is broken and spread by this means over almost the entire surface of Nature, and by reason of its dim and fitful character, bordering upon mystery, possesses a secret hold upon the imagination.

*Transparency* imparts a peculiarly pure brilliance—not gay, but soft. All coarseness or dulness vanishes, and the colours are penetrated with a hidden radiance which delights the fancy. Leaves are enriched to emeralds, water emulates the trembling splendour of amethyst and topaz, clouds become mother-of-pearl. Yet Art must be chary of these beauties, as Nature is. Opacity has its satisfaction; the grainy solid masses, the dull and mingled glooms, feast the eye as with substantial wealth.

But *atmosphere* is the most universal and effective agent in modifying colour. Atmosphere gradates colours, but it also changes them. The green near woods becomes a tender blue in the distance, neutral tinted rocks a pale crimson, and the brown moorland, or dark fir-wood, a rich purple. These general facts are noticed by most of those whose rambles lead them into open country. But few observe how the green of a field fades as it recedes; a green field is to the ordinary eye green all over. The Artist notices the varying quality of the green, that when the atmosphere is suffused with sunlight

the nearer green is a golden yellow, the distant almost blue. And this will explain my meaning when I spoke of the rarity of bright or gay colours. Though the green below and the blue above be bright, they are so modified as not to oppress the eye with any garish effect; and Atmosphere in this is a principal agent. The colour of the Atmosphere, depending upon certain conditions and the position of the sun, tinges all colours. It alters a landscape as much as if seen through tinted glasses. So that it exercises a double ministry, harmoniously blending all tints in one, and softening them as they recede, till, mingling with those of the sky, it is sometimes hard to decide between the filmy cloud and the far hill-side.

Such being some of the principal modifications under which colour presents itself to the Artist's eye, you will recognize how large a choice lies before him; what materials for selection and combination; with what regal gifts he is endowed by Nature for the vice-royalty he wears. We will briefly indicate the pictorial uses of Colour, following the same order as in regard to Shadow.

In *assisting Form*, Colour has a very limited office. It separates objects which might otherwise blend; as when it removes the distance from the foreground, where in apparent con-

tact, by the immediate contrast of the heavier, coarser colours with the clear and tender—of the opaque with the transparent. And it separates again masses of foliage, or of drapery, by difference of tint. But Colour more often disguises Form—wrapping it in a soft mantle, and withdrawing from view its more severe and uncompromising qualities—a useful office where it accords with the desired tone of sentiment. Yet the gracious aid is treacherous, and he who yields to the witchery of Colour may soon forget the great and pure of Nature's nobler self.

As a *means of composition*, or what, in speaking of Shadow, we called "diversifying surface," Colour possesses a special importance. Here it comes in contact with those original instincts which delight in contrasts, concords, and all the delicious complexities of elaborate harmony. In the mere concatenation of colours according to the size, shape, and intensity of the different patches, there is a pleasure of the same kind as that arising from diversity of Form and Proportion; and this, therefore, is one ground of composition. But Colour of itself appeals to a peculiar sense analogous to that which delights in harmonies of sound. The sources of delight, as we believe, lie deep below the apparatus of either sense or intellect; but

whatever its nature, a susceptible temperament is held by it with the force of a passion. In the interchange of Colour, then, the Artist wields a direct and original power. He touches immediately a fibre of delight—he creates a music for the eye. And, if gifted with this power, he exercises it, as all *power* is exercised, almost unconsciously, and without an effort. He works according to a necessity of his being; rules may keep him from serious mistake, but rules will not bestow faculty of utterance, and here, as elsewhere, it is only from abundance he can distribute gifts.

To such a use of Colour a perception of *organic unity* is indispensable, as it is to all expression. The gathering up of Colours in vivid crises of effect, their union in broad masses, or their equally studied dispersion, is a result of such perception. But beyond this there is an essential unity depending upon association with Form, from which alliance Colour is advantaged both in dignity and expressiveness. The colours of a kaleidoscope, the dabs upon a painter's palette, or the patchwork of a stained-glass window, may possess a unity of the first kind; but how far inferior to the organized, intelligent unity of colour upon a hill-side, betokening its life and growth, and varied composition of rock, and heather, and grass, and bush, which, at a



sufficient distance, blend into one living whole. In this subordination of Colour to Form a superior charm resides, because it calls also for intellectual appreciation; the colours are seen as if built into one another with constructive purpose, and the pleasure is of a higher because of more composite character.

But in yet another manner may organic unity be sought—in tones. Nature herself delights, as we have said, in tones, more than in splendours. Not only in the wonderful harmonies which prevail over all her large surfaces, but in the use she makes of her atmospheres, she displays her sense of completeness and breadth: now bathing all things in a golden flood, now crimsoning over earth and sky, and anon relapsing in every feature into pale and silvery sweetness. These tones embrace all objects in a tender unity of expression, and the Artist follows where Nature leads, dwelling, according to his purpose, upon the rich and deep, or the cool and neutral, tones, that his work may become a living, breathing whole. It is in these effects that the sentiment of a picture is eminently rendered, and in these, therefore, is seen especially the turn of thought, or mood, of which it is the expression. The refinement of tones is perhaps of all attributes of *Colour* that which the Artist most enjoys,



while, perhaps, it is the furthest from ordinary popular apprehension. It demands more of a loving sympathy with Nature than belongs to the work-a-day world ; but, where appreciated, it yields a delicate delight, like that which dwells in the perfumes of a summer-garden, while a still higher, because more intelligent, satisfaction arises from the evidence it gives of unity of thought.

In *direct effect upon the imagination*, Colour, as we have already remarked, cannot compare with Shadow. Its metaphorical use is not so striking, simply because perhaps the dark side of things touches deeper chords than the bright and cheerful. The influence of Colour is mostly animating. The dancing gaiety of rich colours has a festal association. They speak of daylight, action, regal pomp, and, to us chilly Northerners, of the vivid splendours of the South. But the imagination moves more freely in presence of the subdued and mingled tones of which we have just spoken. These affect us as the changeful tints of morning, evening, mist and storm affect us ; they are full of the same symbolic beauty. It must not be forgotten, however, that in these tints Colour has become more or less associated with Shadow, and that to this probably much of the enhanced expressiveness is due. Still we may assign to the

tender intermingled tones charms of their own, inasmuch as the fancy has more play, as the eye has more range, in pursuing the almost imperceptible gradations and blendings; while the analogy with all that is refined in thought and feeling imparts its own significance.

You have seen, I trust, in this brief survey, how much there is for the Artist to concern himself with besides the mere brightness of his tints; that fine colouring is a very different thing from fine colours; that here, as in Forms and Shadows, Art must go beyond the mere external pleasurableness of the thing, and rises in value only as it rises into the region of imaginative emotion. And here also, as in Form, the necessities of expression as well as the limitation of means demand compromise. Here also there may be generalization. Such compromises and generalizations depend upon the nature of the subject: if it be one of deep and solemn purpose, the play and dalliance of Colours as naturally disappear, as they would from the observation of him who, under powerful emotion, beheld the actual scene. Such an one would be conscious only of certain broad and general facts of Colour; and with broad and general tones, therefore, may such a scene be appropriately accompanied. Yet woe to him who, *venturing* upon such generalization, fails at the

same time to kindle the emotion. In the absence of any commanding truth, the *untruth* stands confessed. But in landscape or domestic subjects, where the interest is calm and the judgment cool, in these we may rightfully expect some of those secrets of colour, curious surprises and evanescent graces, which result from a watchful outlook upon Nature.

We must not forget, however, to mention one inevitable compromise attending every exercise of Art in colour. Illuminating power Art has not, and, therefore, the highest brightness in a picture can never be bright as light. True gradation is, therefore, impossible; for if the lightest attainable tint, as the whitest paper, be assumed as a practical starting point, gradation thence would speedily land you in blackness. A medium must, therefore, be chosen; and here lies an evident field for skill, especially as there are various devices for imposing upon the eye in this respect. Some seek to obtain brilliance by immediate opposition of deepest darkness to brightest light; others by contrasted tints—or interchange of reflections—or suffused tones—or by elaborate gradation. Whatever may be his method, we must measure the Artist's success according to the circumstances of the case—by the sentiment of his subject, and by the ultimate impression produced.

It will be seen that in SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE, and ORNAMENT, Art only, modifies her language according to circumstances. There is the same appeal to the imagination, but without such variety and scope of utterance as in Pictorial Art.

SCULPTURE is a presentation of Form through a succession of contours, as the spectator varies his position. The pure, white, blank marble leaves nothing but exterior form to dwell upon. Colour, except in the faintest and most suggestive tints, would at once destroy that appeal to the imagination which is essential to Art. The attempt at literal imitation would only betray its helpless inefficiency; the lifeless lumps of coloured flesh could only move disgust, as the comparison with the breathing suppleness of life would be forced upon the mind. Confining itself to form, the pure and exalted aim of Sculpture is undisturbed, and the imagination rejoices in the suggested thought. Perspective and Shadow are subjects of consideration to the Sculptor, but as regards only the ultimate effects of both when his work assumes its destined place. He may choose such a composition as shall cast advantageous shadows, and he may modify Form in some degree to counteract any injurious effect of Perspective.

ARCHITECTURE can exhibit beauty and ex-

pressiveness of line, but it is especially connected with beauty and fitness of proportion. Organic Unity is here also of vital importance—that the whole, in style and detail, shall be inspired by one prevailing sentiment, and speak its appropriate purpose. The same consideration of the effect of Shadow, as diversifying surface, occurs here as in Sculpture—a point of picturesque value often overlooked. Colour, in some of its lower functions, is applied advantageously in Architecture, but not in its higher intellectual and imaginative combinations.

ORNAMENT is a peculiar and rich branch of Art, now receiving more of the attention it deserves. Here combinations of line, of proportion, and of colour, all come into play, under somewhat peculiar conditions; more conventional than imitative, but legitimate as founded upon true and original principles, and adapted to an entirely conventional purpose.

I ought to acknowledge to you, however, that the admission of conventional form into ornament is a matter of controversy—a controversy affecting, I think, the primary conception of Art. I will recur to it, therefore, in calling your attention now to two or three points which the review we have taken of the various constituents in artistic representation especially illustrates.



Observe, in the first place, how Art lays hold of the abstract inherent relations between Forms and Ideas, and becomes thereby mistress of a language of Nature, and so of a certain amount of original independent expression. I adduce this as bearing against those who, in the controversy just mentioned, hold with Mr. Ruskin, that Art has nothing to do but implicitly to imitate the individual forms of Nature, and who denounce, on that ground, much of the traditionally admired Greek and other styles of ornamentation. If, as I have urged, there is an abstract relation between Forms and Ideas, why may not the Artist, the Architect, the Designer, be allowed to avail himself of this original universal alphabet, and, working in sympathy with Nature, imitate her in her thoughts and purposes, as well as in her individual concrete expressions?—though it may be fully admitted that it is through a study of her individual forms that the alphabet is learnt. I should hold this power of original combination to be one of the prerogatives of man—part of that creative faculty with which he is endowed in virtue of his relation to the Almighty Designer.

Remark, again, it is from this abstract quality of Form that touch, manipulation, or “handling,” derives its interest and value; a

genuine value, therefore, although very subordinate. Every man differs in handling, as he does in handwriting; we may grant that it is often very conventional—often paraded to the neglect of higher qualities; but there is a legitimate pleasure in a good touch, whether the best for the immediate purpose of delineation or not, derived solely from the opposition, the interweaving, and adjustment of the brush-marks, taken simply as so many lines or shapes.

Secondly, we may understand how means of imitation, very imperfect as such, are yet adequate to the purposes of Art; and the nature of the *compromise* which Art *must* make with Nature. Any imitation of Nature must be imperfect. Pictorial imitation which represents objects upon a flat surface must be eminently so. The appearance of relief can never be fully accomplished, it never deludes, as a comparison with the results of the stereoscope at once displays. And how, even on the finest pictures, can lumps of paint really represent the pure, penetrable, spaces of Nature, or her infinite variety of surface? How can light be reproduced in that which has itself to be illuminated before it can be seen? How can gradations and contrasts be adequately rendered which in Nature are inexhaustible, revealing a shade within every light, and a light within every

shade? Or how can the inextricable maze of forms and colours be followed by any mortal hand were they motionless, still less in their unceasing movement? Fortunately the purposes of Art can be served otherwise. They are consistent with the admission of large compromises. Art appeals from, and to, the Imagination. Art is the handmaid of that faculty which recognizes and deals with the latent import and suggestiveness of the outward form; and that latent meaning, that subtle analogy, can be brought to view by something far short of absolute or literal imitation. The delicate combinations, for instance, of the straight with the curved, can be given in a pencil-stroke, as well as by an elaborate representation of the forms in which they occur; and so also can the ruling idea in an organic combination of forms. What property of the form of a leaf, except the minor one of texture, but can be rendered in this manner? Nay, we may say, perhaps, that the very highest qualities—measured as they affect the intellect—are the more readily expressed through the simplest means; the poverty of the means concentrating the attention upon the one thing intended to be conveyed. We have already alluded to instances of this in the outlined or rudely sketched figures of some of the greatest masters. The *compromise*, therefore,

which belongs to all artistic representation by no means derogates from its power. It consists in selecting that in a subject which touches most nearly the imagination. The character of this selection will vary according to the individual taste, purpose, or power of the Artist; but so long as the compromise is made in favour of something higher, if the sacrifice be manifestly of an inferior merit, for a nobler, there is no loss, but a gain, so far as artistic expression is concerned.

Thirdly, we may learn, from a consideration of the sources of pleasure in Form, *the reasons and grounds of artistic selection and combination*. Why is one object better fitted for representation than another? Why is one point of view of the same object better than another? We reply, that, in the first instance, an object is available for Art exactly in the degree in which its lines and proportions combine in those agreeable shapes which we have endeavoured to show are innately significant and pleasing to the eye. Such opportunity ought not to be overlooked. Truth alone is not sufficient for Art—its proper province is the truth of beauty. Because “I saw it so,” is not an adequate excuse for untoward combinations, if better could be obtained without detriment to higher purposes. Such higher purposes belong to what I have called



the organic unity of a subject, or its vivid expression, and these may cover, or even require, incongruities—dislocations in the harmonies of lines—as musical compositions require discords. The highest ground of selection lies, therefore, in those qualities which are especially moving to the imagination—those whereby a subject utters itself the most forcibly—those in which it speaks emphatically its purpose or its history. The combination of all these grounds of selection constitutes *picturesqueness*. A simple example will afford the best illustration.

Compare a new field-gate, square and tight, with a nodding, crazy, weather-stained stile. The latter goes into the sketch-book as picturesque, the former is instinctively avoided for any such purpose. The difference consists, in the first place, in the character of the lines, proportions, and colours. The lines of the stile are broken, opposed, and combined in a variety of angles. In the gate they are straight, and their angles are right angles. The shadows of the stile are naturally the more complex, with its greater complexity of form; and the colours are alike enriched, subdued, and blended; while those of the gate are crude and staring. In these distinctions we find the *primary* causes of the picturesqueness of the one object as compared with the other. But far more important

are those which belong to the character, purpose, history of the object itself. See how the stile appeals in these respects to the imagination, while the gate has nothing to say! The stile leans with the stress and weight of wear, its feet are buried in herbage, its bars are held together by extra clamps, empty holes betray the loss of rusted nails, worms have covered it with elaborate tracery, lichens have crept into every cranny. It is bleached from many a sun and shower; polished by the hands, and grated by the feet, of many a labourer, who, morning and evening, and year after year, has crossed it on his outward and homeward way. It is scored and hacked by generations of school-boys; and it is cunningly inscribed with the joint initials of whispering lovers. The gate, in its naked newness, speaks of nothing but the carpenter's shop and the paint-pot. The stile is a poem, the gate a mechanical fact. The one is picturesque; it demands, as it is fitted for, artistic expression; the other is unpicturesque, and no considerations of usefulness or fitness can make it otherwise.

But if such are the principles of selection, with regard to any one object of artistic representation, not the less must they govern the selection and arrangement of a multitude of objects, such as any extensive work of Art must

contain. The lines of the whole must combine so as to satisfy the instinctive demands of the eye in respect to character, opposition, unity in diversity, and the like. Meaning by this, that all the objects introduced must be so arranged as to form, in relation to each other and the entire result, lines agreeable in composition. So also must the proportions, whether of pure form, of light and shadow, or of colour. And emphatically must the whole possess that organic unity—that subordination, and gathering up into a focus of expression, which the adequate rendering of any single object demands. “A picture,” worthy of the name, answers to all these conditions; and a consideration of them will unravel many difficulties, explain apparent incongruities, falsities, or seemingly unnecessary compromises. You may not at first perceive the principle of selection, or ground of arrangement; but, especially if the picture is acknowledged as the work of a master, accord to him an intention, not perhaps immediately manifest, and patiently search for it. Acquaint yourself with his point of view—surrender yourself, without too closely criticizing the means, to the impression he has sought to produce; confine yourself to that, and you will probably soon open upon a new and peculiar revelation, or you will find yourself touched with a new emotion,

or endowed with a new association of ideas, which to your life's end will yield an ever fresh delight.

The landscapes of Rubens, strange as they may look at first, are full of effects which, when from time to time recognized in Nature, are the more charming there, because they recall the rough canvas or harshly cut engraving which first drew your attention to them. Or take, as an illustration of consummate composition and expression, Turner's large picture of Cologne, exhibited at the Manchester Art Treasures. I heard it spoken of as "that great yellow thing," and at a first glance I remember yielding a reluctant assent to that derogatory appellation. Afterwards it became by far the most fascinating of all the landscapes. The idea began to take hold of me, the predominating sentiment to infuse itself. I soon felt it to express in all its lines, proportions, shadows, colours, in all its wondrous and complex unity, the very essence of the dreamy imaginations which haunt the glorious old Rhine river and city. It is the Rhine, with all its burden of poetry and romance, that flows before you, bathed in its golden summer sunlight; and it is the Cologne, half mediæval, half modern, the quaint bustling city, through whose antique portals the River first salutes the traveller, with its crowd of strange-looking



craft at its quays, and its long boat-bridge swinging in the stream. Undoubtedly only at rare moments would the actual scene answer to its ideal; at rare moments, only, would the mind be in an answering mood; but the Artist's function is to seize such a moment, and at the necessary cost, it may be, of some exaggeration, and, by a concentrated effort, to raise and sustain such a mood in the mind of the beholder. For this he floods his picture with the afternoon sunlight, absorbs his shadows in the hazy glow, perplexes the eye with innumerable reflected lights and tremulous tints; for this he groups a solemn maze of towers, and gathers a glittering sheaf of masts. Everything is selected, arranged, subdued, emphasized, which may help the one predominating impression, and leave it to the imagination like one of its own visions of glory and beauty. Such a work is High Art—it is a poem—a creation—an eloquent utterance of a noble conception.

It is thus that selection and arrangement vindicate their high place in Art. It is thus that imitation is seen subservient to a higher end. The notes are the notes of Nature, but they are arranged in soul-thrilling chords of harmony, and create new, or revive forgotten, associations in the mind. The power of selection and combination is the prerogative of the

Artist. It guides his hand from first to last, descending to the felicitous combinations of lines and proportions, and ascending to the unities of expression, and the final purpose of the whole. Possessed of this power, he imitates Nature more in her thoughts than in her facts, and a work comes forth worthy of one who is independent of Nature, because he stands in intimate relation with its Author.

We must now bring our conclusions to bear as briefly as possible upon those questions of popular interest to which we adverted at the outset. And first, WHAT ARE THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN BAD ART—GOOD ART—AND HIGH ART?

If we define Bad Art, we need not spend much elucidation upon its opposite, and our task will be so far shortened. Of Bad Art we may reckon two principal varieties. That which results from *imperfect perception*, and that arising from *false method*. By the first we intend an incapacity to recognize those properties of lines, proportions, and colours which are the primary objects of artistic observation. A person must be able to distinguish musical sounds, or he cannot hope to be in any sense a musician. So no one can hope to be an Artist who has not both a natural appreciation of the qualities of Form and Colour, and a disciplined

habit of observing and recording them. It is seldom, perhaps, that a person thus absolutely disqualified attempts anything in Art; yet specimens may sometimes be seen which betray an extraordinary inaptitude of discernment in these particulars, and which distress the eye as much as false notes grate upon the ear. Defect of this kind is not, however, always associated with incapacity. We find it in the early Italian and German masters, but compensated for by intensity of purpose; while it has appeared in some extraordinary instances of late as the result apparently of sheer affectation. Bad drawing, bad composition, and bad colour, having been adopted by some of our modern pre-Raphaelites out of pure perversity, who on this ground might be included under our second head of "false method," to which we now proceed.

By False Method, however, we mean more especially to characterize a form of bad Art far more common, and to be heartily repudiated, although it implies a certain amount of true artistic feeling. Here the beauty of form and colour is appreciated, but it is rendered in combinations of unvarying monotony. A technical or conventional facility of execution is its fatal mark. That all Art is necessarily conventional, and a matter of continual compro-

mise, we have strenuously urged ; but such conventionalities and compromises should be the result of a special and individual study of Nature, or it is no longer *utterance*. We may well complain, therefore, of the imitation of these conventionalisms—the study of Nature through the windows of the schools—the adoption of an artistic shorthand, handed down through generations of Artists till it falls into a thoroughly artificial and lifeless mechanism. With this form of bad art we are deluged. The uninstructed requirements of those who buy, encourage it ; the demand for quick and cheap production, necessitates it ; and it is a grade of accomplishment which commonplace abilities can attain. It arises mainly from a false and low estimate of the proper dignity of Art, leading to false methods of applying artistic faculty, though we often meet with instances of it from those who know better, but descend to it from haste or carelessness. In *them* the technical facility may reach a high point of excellence. The fault lies in its being *only* technical—only a stereotyped method of producing certain effects—skilful hand-work rather than head-work.

This depraved conventionalism is found vitiating the entire structure of a picture, from the mere manipulation to the original selection



and treatment of the subject. We have already remarked that every man, of any individuality of character, will betray it as much in his brush-marks as in his handwriting; and the mere *handwriting* of the brush finds numerous imitators, who ought to be studying the changeful mystery of a diviner handiwork. Let such be well assured that a free and spirited "touch," as the phrase goes, can only be valuable as it proceeds from a free mind, exercising its own individual and unimitable gift, as the interpreter of Nature's symbols. But technical mannerism does not stop here; it affects also the selection and combination of forms and colours. Some obvious or hackneyed mode is adopted, affording a ready means of producing an artistic effect. Figures assume certain attitudes with the regularity of clock-work; they sit, or kneel, or stand according to time-honoured pattern. They are grouped according to pattern, every gesture is in "stock." Landscapes are put together upon approved and easy principles of composition. The cloud and sunbeam descend—as "per order." The brown tree duly "sets" to the green. The eye, instead of being rejoiced with the freshness of Nature, wearies at the uniformity of Art. Nor is this fatal conventionalism excluded from the high domain of the Ideal: Idealisms, which have been reached by

some eagle flight, are forthwith brought into the market and ignobly done to death. Generalizations grasped by some strong hand are shelved for use. Every thought of the large-brained masters is bottled for an occasion, till the practice of Art is reduced to a trick of the cunning fingers. All this implies poverty of power, or unworthy haste; and for the same cause modern Art harps so pertinaciously upon worn out topics. The same thoughts, and the same rendering of the same thoughts, occur along the walls of our exhibitions, as you will hear the same barrel-organ tunes at the corners of every street. The sameness of the old masters in subject was owing to their devotion to one lofty and unapproachable ideal. Our modern masters betake themselves to a wide and rich field, but only that they may pick up platitudes. Mediæval history, English social and rustic life, Italian and Oriental scenery and incidents, supply the usual themes; and, in the style of Art I allude to, with most distressing monotony of treatment. Who is not familiar with the knight and the monk, who in armour and serge—and in the same armour and the same serge—make their appearance with melancholy persistence? and with the lover sighing to the maiden to absolute fatuity? and with the bandit handling his very ancient carbine? and with

that hay or harvest field which is filled, year by year, with the identical rustics of the year before?

This conventionalism is, as I have intimated, the bane of modern Art—especially of the Art of the shop-window. By supplying an artificial system of manipulation, it supersedes that nice observation of form which lies at the root of artistic perception. It enfeebles the power of selection and arrangement, by offering easy and ready-made combinations; it substitutes generalities for generalizations; and debases the ideal almost into the idiotic. In range of subject and sentiment, it doses the imagination with the stalest stimulants; and, in fine, Art under its influence is no longer a vehicle for expression, but a method of arranging trite phrases. The mistake lies in regarding the language of Art as its end, rather than its means. In opposition to another error, we have repeated often enough that Art is a Language, but it is so for the purpose of expression. It is not a vague collection of sweet sounds: they must mean something; but this they cannot do unless the *Artist* means something, and he can mean *nothing* unless he has seen what other men have not seen, unless he is charged with a veritable message, great or small, from the Infinite. We must deny that

to be true Art which does not possess this original and individual character.

It is, of course, as difficult to draw the line between goodness and badness here as in morals. Original power is not always original in its utterances. An instance occurs to me from one of our first Artists, which I select as being widely known, though you will perhaps smile at my audacity when I name the "Bolton Abbey" of Sir Edwin Landseer. But none will know better than himself how intrinsically conventional is the treatment of that picture. The skill is all conventional skill. The attitudes are the stock attitudes of the atelier. The countenances are generalized to insipidity. The drapery falls in obvious folds, and without any of the curious accidents of Nature. The figures have no vital reality, they are only elegantly postured accessories to the spoils of the chase. The whole bears evidence of what was, undoubtedly, the fact, that it was put together only as a frame-work for the dead game; while of technical excellence there is no lack, there is none of that original deduction from Nature, or of that individual inspiration which is necessary to an artistic creation. Sir Edwin Landseer can well afford me this specimen of a technically excellent, and yet inferior work of Art, since he has produced so many admirable



specimens of Art in its highest sense. Take, for instance, the "Evening Return from Deer Stalking" over the rough Highland bridge. Observe how every part of this charming composition bears upon the sentiment of the whole—the tender melancholy of declining day. Or, again, take "The Sanctuary," where the exhausted stag, emerging, dripping, from the lake, upon the safe island strand, startles the wild duck from the plashy weeds. In these two pictures there is all the Landseer mannerism, but it is the genuine mannerism of the man, and it is entirely subsidiary to the thought it conveys. The Art is not confined to the language. The *word* is a true word, for it has reached and touched the sympathies of the imagination.

It might seem that I have reduced the specimens of Good Art to a very small number by insisting upon such stringent conditions. But if I have narrowed the range of choice to those who have hitherto accepted anything with admiration that looked tolerably pretty, I shall now, on the other hand, hope to enlarge it for those whose greater intelligence has only led them to a fastidious exclusiveness. The one absolute condition of genuine Art we must, indeed, hold to be *individuality*. It can never be a manufactured article. But this individuality may express itself in two directions, and



all Art is good which complies with either of the two following conditions: an original independent study of the *specialities* of Nature; or an equally original expression of her *grand unities*, which are the highest sources of emotion. Under the former condition (a certain amount of artistic competence being assumed), any faithful study of an object, however trivial, be it but a leaf or a pebble, is a true work. It is so far a revelation, it has opened up a pure rill from the deep, ever-flowing fountain of Truth. And, under the second condition, wherever some thought is vividly conveyed, or some sentiment or emotion is adequately appealed to, there also is Art; and Art exercising its highest gift of utterance.

The term "High Art" applies to the latter class of works. Size is not necessary to it, though, as the specimens of High Art left us by the old masters are generally large, this by some has been erroneously supposed. Nor is it essential that High Art should be exclusively concerned with abstract, instead of individual form, though many of its subjects are generalizations and ideals. Nor, again, is High Art confined to a peculiar range of subject—the historical, for instance—though it exercises some of its best gifts in epic composition. Nor, finally, is laborious finish necessary. But

wherever is exhibited that sympathetic possession of a subject which implies penetration into its inner and nobler life—an appreciation of its highest fact, or its symbolic reference; wherever, in fine, the imagination is appealed to, there is High Art. A large canvas is not necessary; for great or pathetic thoughts may be put within a square inch of paper—as in the exquisite vignettes of Bewick. Nor purely abstract or ideal form; for individual form, as in Mr Hunt's "Claudio and Isabella," may thrill with emotion. Nor historical or allegorical subjects, or scenes from the poets, for some of Turner's landscapes are themselves poems. Nor elaborate execution, for Raffaele's cartoons are coarse and cold, and Albert Durer and Flaxman designed in black and white. All these belong to High Art because of their power and range of expression; because they penetrate beyond the details of surface to the inspiring forces within; because they put strong thoughts or emotions into visible shape; because they seize upon some of the most impressive of those analogies which exist between the spiritual and the material world.

Accepting both forms of Art as equally legitimate, though not equal in rank, namely, the study of special detail, and the rendering of the large unities, you will be enabled to enjoy a

far wider liberty of admiration than modern controversialists will allow to their respective disciples. War reigns between the partisans of the one and the other; but it is a war in which a catholic lover of Art need not embroil himself, while yet in all candour he may proceed to discriminate between the OLD MASTERS AND THE MODERN. This comparison was very forcibly urged upon all visitors to the Manchester Art Treasures. No one could walk from the South to the North Courts without passing some sort of judgment upon the matter. In such a comparison we must put aside the great difference in choice of subject, as, for instance, the predominance among the old masters of Ecclesiastical or Mythologic topics. We are concerned only with the relative *artistic* quality; and here it was I think impossible not to admit a great distinction—that the old masters characteristically dealt with the grand unities, while the modern dwell especially upon the specialities of a subject; the old masters are synthetic—the modern analytic. But there are exceptions to be noted in both classes. The earlier masters, for instance, do not exhibit that peculiar power of synthesis. Their *Art* was feeble and cramped. They had not mastered it as a vehicle of expression, and were reduced to help out their meaning by arbitrary conventionalisms. It would

seem, therefore, that they united the two chief characteristics of bad Art—being not only wanting in artistic perception, but falsely conventional. From this latter limbo, however, they are amply redeemed by the fact, that their conventional expedients were not in consequence of poverty of thought, but were rather the result of its intensity and fulness. The moral expressiveness of the human form it was their especial and lofty aim to render, and few could look upon such pictures as Botticelli's "Agony in the Garden," and the same subject by Mantegna, in the Gallery of Early Art at Manchester, without recognizing an earnestness and strength of purpose, which compensate for deficiency of utterance. The later schools, on the contrary, with no less energy of thought, show an extraordinary possession of the resources of Art in moulding, idealizing, creating its own world. Where the Roman, the Venetian, the Flemish, and the Spanish pictures were displayed, the walls were all ablaze with the splendour of genius. Every subject was grasped in its unity, and wrought up to emphasis. It could be seen that the men of these schools built up forms and contrasted colours with large and grand purpose—forms and colours which they borrowed from Nature rather than imitated, turning them to their own



uses. And with these materials, however strange or even extravagant might be their management of them, they always effectively told their story or kindled emotion. They burnt in their meaning with the vivid contrasts of lightning and the thunder-cloud rather than miss it. Yet they could be calm with their strength, and repose upon the intrinsic majesty of the pure and beautiful. What need to name Michael Angelo and Raffaele, Titian and Tintoretto, Rubens and Rembrandt, Murillo and Velasquez? Without characterizing their distinctive merits, it is sufficient to point out that they all belong to the high domain of *organic and constructive unity*, and that all imply individual and independent observation; that they all bear marks of a mental furnace-heat, which fused and transformed whatever was submitted to it. We must assign to the period distinguished by these great names, the culmination of Art as to noble utterance, for the Bolognese school, as represented especially by the Caracci, drops from the height of Art as a means, to the lower level of Art as an end. It delights in form and colour for their own sake only, marking the commencement of that conventional and merely technical accomplishment, which, while it indicates a refined and critical taste, implies the absence of original power. The

language is good in itself, but there is no special thing to say, nothing that has not been said before in bolder and more stirring accents.

It is after making this descent, that we enter the precincts of modern English Art. The earlier specimens of our own school are not illustrations of that other form of Art which I mentioned as characterizing its modern phase. The aim was still to deal with the larger and nobler side of Nature, but the power was gone. West, Northcote, Opie, Wilson, all imitated the great constructive efforts of their masters, and failed, where failure is fatal; for he who leaves the ground of special fact must either reach the upper and ethereal regions, or hover hopelessly between earth and heaven, a spectacle of inflated nothingness. We must, however, place Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Hogarth in a different category, as endowed with unmistakable and peculiar gifts. It is at a later period that modern Art adopts its characteristic line—the analysis of special form and colour, and the range of the more domestic emotions. This form of Art does not construct, but it minutely dissects; and demands keen, patient, and loving observation, rather than remarkable mental grasp. Those possessed of this latter gift instinctively seize upon ideal forms, or *concentrate* their efforts upon some ultimate fact;

but the Artist temperament of which we now speak lies passively open to the pleasurable sensations which every line and tint of visible Nature are fitted to awaken. Its possessor delights to saunter at ease through Nature's treasures, and to handle, dispose, and display every separate gem and jewel. It is in landscape, or in natural objects, that this tendency finds scope, and a rich revelation of the varied charms of scenery is the result. The fleeting effects of shadows from our English skies, the captivating play of colour, and the pathos of historical association, have been the chief topics upon which our Nature-loving Art has descanted. And in subjects of higher grade it has still been the *incidental* rather than the *intrinsic* which has attracted the Artist eye. While, therefore, we may cordially recognize a legitimate and valuable exercise of the artistic faculty, we must hold that intellectually it is of a lower grade than that of those whom we still claim as the "great masters."

But we are now necessarily brought to the subject of PRE-RAFFAELLITISM, the denomination of our latest and most remarkable school of Art. Here the pencil has appealed to the pen, that veteran combatant, who shakes his plume and spills his ink in every controversy. The conflict has been sharp, and the feud is

still unappeased between the opponents and the admirers of the new school. I shall simply endeavour to show the bearing of our general theory upon this matter. So far, then, as Pre-Raffaellitism is an exercise of analytic power—so far as it favours an independent study of Nature in her minutest details—so far as it is an expression of active, unfettered thought—we must acknowledge it as legitimate, and welcome it to a high place in that branch of the priesthood of Art. But the name implies something else, and the controversies to which it has given rise turn upon something else. The *name* implies an adoption of the style of the early Italian Masters, whom we have spoken of as deficient in almost all the proper qualities of Art, *excepting the vital one*, original conceptive power; and our Pre-Raffaellites, in adopting the style adopted its defects—more glaringly at first than now—so that their figures were little better than galvanized anatomies—

\* \* \* “Long and lank, and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand;”

while the most obvious faults in Perspective were reproduced with Chinese scrupulosity. Now, in this procedure, our friends did not look at Nature, but at something else—or they looked at her, if not through the windows of



the school, through the windows of the cathedral—grimly distorting or quaintly bedizening every form of beauty. Yet what is this but conventionalism!—the most dangerous adversary of Art, and to which, in its modern aspect, the Pre-Raffaellites are especially opposed. We must accuse them, therefore, in this of an obvious inconsistency.

The early masters may readily be excused in their singularities, because they could not help them. They were relics of hieroglyphic symbol, or consequent upon the Artist-hand not having yet acquired its proper freedom. But their modern admirers cannot thus deprecate censure, they therefore justify their procedure by a special theory. This theory impugns, directly or indirectly, every one of the positions we have endeavoured to establish. Not to delay you with its exposition, it demands absolute, literal, unconditional imitation of Nature, and repudiates, therefore, selection, combination, generalization, idealism, expressional emphasis—everything which belongs to Art as a *language*, and by which it is distinguished as an appeal to the *imagination*. As a theory, therefore, Pre-Raffaellitism abjures the noblest prerogatives of Art, limiting its power of *utterance*, and reducing it to a soulless mechanism. As a *theory*, we say; fortunately not in practice, for the reason

that such a theory cannot be reduced to practice. We have shown, as we hope, that no genuine exercise of the artistic faculty, however narrow in scope or rigid in intention, can be other than a creative act. It must necessarily involve selection and combination. It *must* bear the impress of intellectual action, because whatever passes through that mysterious alembic, the human brain, infallibly issues therefrom a new and distinct product. The question in every such case is not what the eyes have seen, but what the thoughts have thought.

If, however, the Pre-Raffaellite theory cannot be carried out, what harm does it do? This: as no theory is entirely inoperative, it *does* cramp and bind its adherents to an appreciable extent. Hence their frequently strange and awkward combinations—their failure in depicting beauty, and their frittered and disjointed effects. But it is principally injurious in the spirit of controversy, and of unjust depreciation it has engendered. The exclusive representation of the individual instead of the general, and of the literal instead of the ideal, is vaunted as the *only* proper vocation for Art, and the great examples of an opposite treatment are denounced as corrupt or spurious. Hence the feud which divides so many true lovers of Art. The sole excuse for this lies in remembering

the origin of Pre-Raffaellitism as a revulsion and protest against the imbecile conventionalism into which the English school had fallen. Pre-Raffaellites fled from generalizations and ideals, because they were no longer the product of independent thought, and had become but convenient screens for want of observation and hasty execution. But this does not justify a repudiation of those generalizations and ideals which were the result of a large and lofty unity of purpose, such as led Raffaele to refine his forms, that he might diffuse over the whole a grace and sweetness like an exquisite aroma; or Michael Angelo to distort muscles and exaggerate limbs to impress a sense of unearthly energy and power; or Claude and Cuyp to swim their canvas with the golden haze they loved; or Salvator to throw haggard, ghastly gleams across his riven tree-trunks, that he might fill the mind with indistinct images of terror; or Gaspar Poussin to make all his trees of one sort, not to break the rolling masses of his woodlands. Grant that these old landscape painters omitted to record, or greatly misunderstood, many of the most charming facts in landscape scenery; that they did not notice accurately the manner in which a tree forks its branches, the sweep of waves, or the rack of clouds; but they did appreciate some of the

most imposing moods of Nature, and what they felt they told with vigorous effect. It is not fair, however, to measure Middle Age Art by its landscape. Inanimate Nature was little regarded, compared with the animate; and human form, as the chief exponent of thought and emotion, was its favourite theme. It is here we behold alike comprehensiveness and concentration. The large outlines, rich colours, and decided shadows are instinct with a grand unity of expression. To deny these triumphs to Art is to rob her of her chief glory, and at the same time to forget her most essential conditions.

Not, however, to part from Pre-Raffaellites with a harsh word, let us close, as we began, with praise. In turning the microscope upon Nature, they have opened a new world of beauty, as may well be seen in Mr. Linnell's charming picture of "Spring," which also shows how rapidly the Mediaeval conventionalism is being shaken off. It is no matter for blame if they do not, or cannot, mould their facts with the plastic hand of power. Our purpose throughout this paper has been to urge the catholicity of Art, and that it is equally legitimate to deal with the facts of Nature in all the accidents of their individuality, or in their aspects of higher and universal significance.

Art bears a somewhat similar relation to



PHOTOGRAPHY as it does to essential Pre-Raf-faellitism. Photography can be only an *inventory* of Nature—a record very wonderful, interesting, and valuable; but it can never trench upon the true domain of Art. Photography never extracts the meaning from Nature; she strikes no thought out of her facts, she gives no play to the imagination; she rather imprisons it among her iron literalities. Art, for a time, may look coarse beside the microscopic accuracy of the Photograph; and Photography will be of use in correcting this coarseness, so far as it arises from slovenliness, and of use, also, in compelling Art to betake herself to those higher regions which are peculiarly her own. But as long as the human mind recognizes in Nature an infinite symbolism, so long will Art hold her place as one of its chief means of utterance.

Our subject suggests, before we close, a few remarks upon the PROPER COURSE OF ARTISTIC EDUCATION AND STUDY. Any genuine education in Art must, as it appears to me, pass through two essential stages, and the study which is life-long to the Artist must possess a similarly twofold character. The first process is (to quote again a phrase of Mr. Ruskin's) *the restoration of the innocence of the eye, i.e.*, its disabuse of the various preconceived notions, derived either from the abstract shapes of things, or from its

own carelessness in observation,—to enable it to see simply and absolutely what is before it, and to *dissect* the constituents of Form. To see truly is the first and most essential requisite ; and, as we have remarked, it is astonishing how much practice this requires. Yet practice of this sort is entirely ignored in the ordinary school method of learning to draw. Of course, also, accuracy of eye must be seconded by a certain amount of accuracy of hand, which should be rendered competent to any requisite effort of delineation ; but even this most obvious mechanical qualification is neglected in the usual system of the drawing-master. Confining our notice, however, to the higher discipline of the eye, it will be apparent that to copy passably a sketchy drawing does not advance the pupil one step in the true perception of Form. A freedom in flourishing the pencil, which is a different thing from accuracy, is the utmost that is attained. But the learner is not exercised in observing the nice combinations of the straight with the curved, nor the relations and oppositions of lines, nor the relative proportions of parts. The Bristol-boarded pencil, or coloured sketch, usually brought home from school, is absolutely valueless as regards these first requisites. It is no criterion whatever that the eye has learnt to *see* at all. The Government

Schools of Design are, I believe, doing much to correct this false method; and here and there a drawing-master, to the injury, I fear, of his popularity, adopts the true course, obliging his pupils to observe and imitate with care, the simplest objects—a cup, a jug, a plate, a pail—and so advancing from outline to light and shadow, and thence to colour, upon the self-same example.

But having thus disabused and disciplined the eye before an object, so that it shall see nothing but what is there, and *all* that is there; the next thing is to bestow upon it that enlargement of vision which follows from knowing *what* to look for—where to fix its chief regard. But let none who have not good reason to believe themselves gifted with the artistic instinct attempt this higher branch of study. They must possess intuitive power before learning to apply it. It will be seen that I refer here to that faculty which apprehends subjects in their organic unity—in their living wholeness—demanding a comprehensiveness of eye, and a sympathy of soul, through which the higher analogies are detected and receive expression, and by which the work of the Artist is assimilated to that of the Poet. A person may possess this sympathy, but failing in grasp of vision, or ignorant how to employ

it, may fail in turning it to account. Here instruction and practice may avail, and the study of great examples may inspire. He will see how utterance has been made of these larger facts of Nature by her great interpreters, and he will learn reverently, but independently, to question her, and receive responses for himself.

I have described the course of artistic education as passing through two stages; but for the Artist the first stage is never obsolete—the two must be combined to his life's end, for *his* education is always in progress. However qualified he may be to exercise the full prerogatives of Art in subordinating fact to expression, he must still study the *fact afresh* in every instance. If he does not, he will speedily fall into the false and conventional. This is why the study of *individual* Form is always necessary to the Artist. It is the food of his Art, and if not constantly supplied, a fatal exhaustion speedily supervenes. But he studies Form for an end, that he may pass it through the crucible of his mind, refine from it whatever of beauty or sentiment it may contain, and bring it into due relation with a purpose or a thought. In this way he is constantly yielding to Nature, and yet establishing his supremacy; ever learning, but



telling what he has learnt in his own God-given language.

God-given we call it, as every good gift comes from Him ; and this recognition brings us fitly to our last consideration—the *true position of the Artist* in the social economy. We claim for him no less an office than that of Interpreter and Minister of Nature—not in her Laws and Operations—that is the care of the man of Science—that is the appeal she makes to the Reason ; but in her external and visible form,—the appeal she makes to the Imagination. An appeal not merely for the sake of idle gratification, for no genuine gratification of which our nature is capable is idle, although it may be idly used. All pleasurable sensations are part of the high gift of *Life*—Life which is in itself one great palpitating happiness, throbbing through every vein and nerve of our complicated being, because it is a perpetual emanation from the ever blessed God ! Of this beneficent gift of happiness, the Imagination is one of the choicest avenues—a mental nerve along which it thrills. This exquisite faculty is delicately affected by all the analogies which run through visible Nature ; by the tones of that response which the visible world of matter unceasingly renders to the invisible world of thought and emotion. Unconscious though we

may be of the source or purport of such analogy in each particular instance, it is still the ground of the enjoyment we experience in all those relations, combinations, complexities, and yet harmonies of form and colour of which this language of Nature is composed. To this enjoyment Art continually ministers as she takes up the same perpetual utterance. And thus descanting always upon the beauty and significance of Form, she can bring the world of Nature within the narrow walls of every house. Thus, if she find favour in our sight, she can irradiate the inner chamber with a perpetual sunshine, and bring blue skies and green trees under the smoke-darkened atmosphere of cities, to soothe the heart and calm the brain, or record for unceasing solace the glance and the smile of relative and friend. With loftier purpose, presenting the shape and circumstance of events at some transient but supreme moment of history, she can stir emotion to its depths; or she can delight the eye with visions of beauty and grandeur, which the pen must labour to describe.

Let the Artist be worthy of his Art, let him never give forth less than all he is capable of seeing and feeling in the face of Nature. Let him lift himself above the mercenary motive of providing cheap substitutes for honest labour of

the brain and hand. Let him dismiss all jealousies, for he is one of a great priesthood whose office and service is one. Let him, above all, be careful that as Interpreter of Nature he rightly interprets. Let him not hold up the fair countenance of Nature only as a mask, to hide the usurping mocking face of the Devil! For the Artist may become Priest to Nature in the evil, Pagan sense, wresting her speech to foul purposes, and filling the temple of God with demons. Let him not subject himself to be scourged out of those precincts for the pollutions he has brought there. Alas! there is too much need to speak of this false ministry of Art—a ministry to lusts and passions! But no such Art shall stand. As Christianity performs her cleansing work we shall become, may we not hope, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And Art, let us be assured, will not save sin, but partake of its destruction.

Understanding, however, the true and high ministration of Art, and faithfully fulfilling it—possessing and using that original insight, and ability of expression, which are his special gifts, the Artist serves his generation, nay, many generations, as long as a tint or a line lingers upon his canvas as he spreads abroad the thought of Beauty. If he be faithful he will not wait long for appreciation—or if he does wait long,

what of that? It is divine to wait—and has he not meantime an abundant reward in that communion with Nature which he must daily foster—in that sympathy with all her moods, of which he must be always susceptible—in the faculty of utterance which dwells within him—in the exercise which Art so specially affords of that creative, formative power which bears witness to the inherent prerogatives and dignity of Man?

THE END.









